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LOS ANGELES

MATILDA;

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF AN ORPHAN,

An Interesting Tale.

From her Temptation, in despair, withdrew,
Nor more assaults whom it could ne'er subdue.
Virtue confirm'd, and regularly brought
To full maturity by serious thought,
Her actions with a watchful eye surveys,
Each passion guides, and every moment sways:
Not the least failure in her conduct lies,
So gaily modest, and so freely wise.

POMFRET.

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MATILDA,

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF AN ORPHAN.

MATILDA was the daughter of Edward Berkley, an Irish gentleman, who early in life embraced the profession of arms, and was gradually raised to the command of a company.

During the American war Captain Berkley distinguished himself by his valour and humanity, and when the army returned to Britain, he accompanied his regiment to Scotland. The troops were quartered in a fort adjacent to the mansion of a Scotch nobleman, who often invited the officers to his table.

Lord V—— had been twice married, and his family consisted of his Lady, two daughters, and his domestics. At a ball given in honour of the officers, Captain Berkley was honoured with the hand of Matilda the eldest daughter. The person of Berkley was elegant; his manners prepossessing; and his tender assiduities soon gained the heart of the innocent and beautiful Matilda, who in a moment of tenderness consented to a private marriage.

The regiment in which Captain Berkley served received orders to march, and it became necessary for his Lady to acquaint her noble father with the clandestine marriage.

His rage was undescribable; he considered his daughter as degraded by an union with a poor officer, and actually commanded her to depart and never again appear in his presence.

Poor Matilda now began to tread the thorny path of life, and though her guide was tender and affectionate, nothing could allay her anguish, for having involved him in difficulties, which his noble spirit was scarcely able to struggle against. The first year of their union she had a son, who was called Edward after his father, and the four years that succeeded his birth was passed in a series of difficulties, which even the cordial endearments of mutual love could scarcely mitigate. Indeed their debts were so increased that Berkly was obliged to sell out on half pay, and as Lady Mitilda now expected an addition to her family, she prevailed upon her husband to conduct her to Scotland, that she might again attempt to soften her father's heart to pity, and forgive.

They lodged at a farmer's house in the vicinity of the family mansion. The evening after their arrival Matilda resolved to obtain an interview with her father. She would not suffer Berkley to accompany her, but leaning on the arm of a peasant, the lovely fugitive approached her natal spot. Her mother-in-law met her in the hall, and with mingled pride and cruelty refused her access to her father, declaring it was by his desire she did so. "Let me see him but for a moment," cried the lovely supplicant, "by all that is tender in humanity, I beseech you to grant my request!" "Turn her out!" exclaimed the inexorable Lady V——.

This order was instantly obeyed, and Mitilda returned with tottering steps to the abode of her husband. Berkley waited for her at the door; she rushed into his extended arms and fainted; it was long ere she shewed any symptoms of returning life. By degrees she revived, and as she pressed her weeping husband to her breast, exclaimed, "The final stroke is given; I have been turned from my father's door."

Captain Berkley was alarmed for the life of his Matilda in her present situation. He immediately proposed a conveyance for her, and the following morning they bade a last adieu to Scotland. Berkley recollected that Edwin, a Welchman, whose life he had saved in battle, and who

afterwards had served him with grateful fidelty, now lived in his native principality on his paternal farm. In the humble dwelling of this honest soldier he sought and found an asylum for his lovely partner in misfortune, and they were welcomed with hospitality by Edwin. He had married soon after his return from America, a young girl, to whom from his earliest youth he was attached, and now lived happily with her on his small patrimonial inheritance. Soothed and attended with the utmost tenderness and respect, Berkley hoped Lady Matilda would regain her health and peace of mind; and he intended, after her recovery, to endeavour to be put on full pay.

At length the hour came in which she gave a daughter to his arms; she lived after the birth of her infant but a few minutes, and died embracing her husband and blessing their children.

The sorrow of Berkley was beyond description. He kissed her cold lips, exclaiming, "Oh! had we never met, she might still have been living."

But, Oh! how impossible it is to describe the anguish of the poor widower's heart when he returned from seeing his Matilda laid in the tomb! "Deep and still," he cried, "is now the sleep of my Matilda—the voice of love cannot awake her from it; nor does she now dream of her midnight mourner."

Religion whispered to his heart a patient resignation to the will of Heaven. His Lady was intered in the village church yard, with a head-stone, on which was rudely cut,

MATILDA BERKLEY,

Alike lovely and unfortunate. This frail memorial is placed here as tribute to her virtues, by her husband,

CAPTAIN EDWARD BERKLEY.

In the soft bloom of youth and beauty's charms,
The fair Matilda grac'd her soldier's arms;
For him relinquished titles, pomp, and wealth,
But, Ah! misfortune's region marr'd her health.
Two children to her husband's arms she gave,
Then sunk lamented to an early grave.

Captain Berkley would not permit her empty title to be inscribed on the tomb-stone. "She is buried," said he "as the wife of a wretched soldier, not as the daughter of a wealthy peer!" The infant daughter was called Matilda af-

ter her unfortunate mother; and as Mrs. Edwin was then nursing her first child, she sent it out, and took the infant of her husband's benefactor to her bosom.

While Captain Berkley's mind continued under the pressure of his recent misfortune, he did not enter into any new project for the subsistence of himself and his children. His Lady was deceased two months, when a nobleman came into the neighbourhood, with whom the Captain had once been intimately acquainted. The acquaintance was renewed, and Berkley's friend was so much affected with his appearance and the little history of his misfortunes, that without solicitation, he procured him a company in a regiment then stationed in England. Thus did Berkley again enter into active life; but his spirits were broken and his constitution injured. He continued in the army four years, when pining to have his children under his own care, he obtained leave to sell out; and retired to a romantic solitude in Devonshire, with his son Edward, who was now eight, and his daughter Matilda four years of age.

Two excellent schools, in the neighbourhood, gave his children the advantages of a genteel education; but as they were only day schools, the improvement of their morals was the pleasing task of their father. To his assiduous care they were indebted for the rapid progress they made in their studies, and for the graceful simplicity of their manners; they rewarded his care, and grew up as amiable as his fondest wishes could desire.

Edward was about eighteen, when the proprietor of the estate, on which his father held his farm, died, and his heir, who was a Colonel in the army, came down to take formal possession. He soon became acquainted with Berkley, and was much pleased with the accomplishments of his son. He soon afterwards departed from Devonshire; and Edward, who was eager to embrace the profession of arms, often expressed his desire to see the world. His anxious father was pleased with his enthusiasm, but was convinced that he could not purchase a commission for his son without depriving himself and his dear little Matilda of support.

From this disquietude he was relieved by a letter from Earl Wilmot, his former friend, informing him that he had procured his son an Ensigncy in Colonel Windham's regiment.

Animated with joy, Edward quitted Devonshire, and

joined his regiment; while the whole attention of Berkley devolved upon Matilda, who amply recompensed his cares by her elegant attainments.

Some years had elapsed since Edward's departure, ere Colonel Windham returned into their neighbourhood. He came soon after the celebration of his nuptials in Ireland, with a beautiful and accomplished young lady of that country. Windham was a man of the most depraved principles, and the instant he beheld the blooming beauties of Matilda, he marked her for his prey,

As he had inspired Berkley with the idea of his being his son Edward's benefactor, he had free access to his house, and he took every opportunity to try to ingratiate himself in the favour of Matilda. The beautiful and unsuspecting girl, increased his passion, by the attention she paid him, which she considered but a just tribute of gratitue for his kindness to her brother. Windham in a retired walk with Matilda, unfolded his infamous designs. At first she did not understand him, but when he explained himself more fully; she turned, and fled, to her father's house as from a monster.

Her paleness and confusion alarmed her father, who commanded her as she valued his love or happiness, to inform him of every particular relative to the insult she had received. She obeyed, though terrified to behold her father trembling with emotion. When she concluded, he tenderly embraced her, rose and took down his hat. She was terrified and besought him not to risk his safety. He commanded her silence with a sternness never before assumed, and hastened to take vengeance on a man who had meditated a deed of such atrocity against his peace and honour. Colonel Windham, however, was not to be found, conscious guilt made him a coward; and he feared to meet the eyes of a brave and incensed veteran.

On his return home, Berkley found a letter from the Colonel, in which he presumed to make the most degrading proposals, and bid Berkley beware how he answered them, as his situation had put him entirely in his power. This was a fatal truth, as the unhappy Berkley was now in considerable arrears to his audacious landlord.

Stimulated by the voice of honour, Berkley again sought Colonel Windham but without success; and the base wretch left the country, having first ordered his steward to proceed

directly against his tenant. The consequence was an immediate execution on his effects, and but for the assistance of a good-natured farmer the unfortunate Berkley would have been arrested. Under favour of the night he set out accompanied by his daughter, and arrived in London in safety, where he retired to obscure lodgings.

Meanwhile Windham had traced the fugitives, and found means to convey letters to Matilda, full of base solicitations. Some months lingered away in all the horrors of penury, when Berkly resolved to send his daughter to Wales. As every precaution was necessary, he made her take the name of Wilson, and travel in the mail-coach for greater security. He wrote to the Edwins, recommending his child to their protection; and after dividing the contents of his purse with her, he with prayers to heaven for the welfare of his lovely child, saw her depart with mingled pain and pleasure.

Mitilda was received by her nurse with maternal fondness, and the transition from a dark narrow street in the metropolis to a fine open country communicated sesations of cheerfulness, but she tenderly regretted the situation of her father, who remained in town for the purpose of applying to his old friend Lord Wilmot for assistance, on his return from France.

The morning after Matilda's arrival in Wales was passed in arranging her little affairs, and in the evening she asked her foster-sister Ellen to take a walk. They approached the church yard where Lady Matilda was buried, and Ellen pointed out the grave to our heroine.

Matilda sunk on her knees and kissed the hallowed earth; her eyes caught the inscription on the tomb-sone, "Sweet spirit," she exclaimed, "heaven now rewards your sufferings. Oh! my mother, if departed spirits are ever allowed to review this world; with love ineffable you may now be regarding your child. Oh! if she is doomed to tread a path as thorny as the one you trod, may the sweetness and patience that distinguished you, support her through it: with the same pious awe, the same meek submission, may she bow to the designations of her creator."

Matilda arose from the consecrated spot weeping; her spirits were entirely overcome, she returned with Ella to the cottage and forgot her sorrows in the soft oblivion of repose.

Next day she could find only a bible, a common prayer book, and a torn collection of ballads in the cottage; but fortunately her nurse recollected that there was a large library at Musehall, a gentleman's seat in the neighbourhood, and which was entrusted to the care of the housekeeper, with whom she was intimately acquainted. Matilda was delighted with this intelligence and the same day was introduced to the housekeeper, who allowed her free access to the library.

Musehall, the white turrets of which were seen from the cottage, was an antique mansion, embosomed in a grove; the library was on the ground floor, and the entrance to it was by a wide folding door: on one side of the library was a row of large windows, arched in the gothic stile; opposite to them were corresponding arches, in the recesses of which the bookcases were placed. The arches were adorned with festoons of laurel, elegantly executed in stucco work, and above them medallions of some of the most celebrated English poets: upon a marble pedestal stood a celestial and terrestial globe, and one of the recesses was entirely hung with maps. The place from its situation and appearance was peculiarly adapted for study and contemplation; all around was solitude and silence, save the soft rustling of the trees, whose dark folige cast a solemn shade upon the windows.

Opposite the entrance to the library was another folding door, which Matilda, excited by curiosity, ventured to open. She entered a large vaulted apartment whose airy lightness formed a pleasing contrast with the gloomy one she had left. The manner in which it was fitted up, and the musical instruments declared this to be a music-room. It was hung with light green damask, bespangled with silver and bordered with festoons of roses; the tables were of fine inlaid wood, and superb lustres were suspended from the ceiling, which represented in a masterly style, scenes from some of our best poets; the orchestra, in the centre of the room, was enclosed with a light ballustrade of white marble, elevated by a few steps.

The windows of this room commanded a pleasing prospect of a romantic dale, skirted with hills displaying a beautiful variety of woody scenery, interspersed with green pastures and barren points of rocks. A cascade fell from one of the highest hills, and being broken by the roots

and branches of trees it flowed down the hill by an hundred different channels, sparkling in the sunbeams.

After Matilda had feasted her eyes with this charming prospect, she turned her attention to the musical instruments, and observing a piano-forte unlocked; she gently raised the lid, and touching the keys found them in tolerable order. Her genius for music had received every aid that her father could possibly give it, and in cultivating her taste he laid up a fund of delights for himself, for "his soul was a stream that flowed at pleasant sounds." Matilda sat down and played a tender air: those that her father loved recurred to her recollection, and she played a few of them. "Ah! dear inestimable father," she sighed, "why are you not here to share my pleasure."

On her return to the library she found that the books were a collection of the best that past or present times had produced. She selected one for perusal. Delighted with her employment, she forgot the progress of time till Ella came with a request from her nurse for her immediate return as dinner was ready.

Matilda went every morning to Musehall, where she alternately played and read. One day as she was engaged at a pleasing piece of music on the piano, which she accompanied with her voice. "Heavenly sounds," exclaimed some one behind her. She started up in terror from the chair and beheld a tall, elegant young man standing by it. "Good heavens!" cried she, blushing and briskly moving towards the door.—"And do you think," said the stranger, springing forward, and intercepting her passage, "I shall let you escape in this manner? No, really, my charming girl, I should be the most insensible of beings, if I did not avail myself of the happy opportunity chance afforded, of intruding leave to be introduced to you." As he spoke he gently seized her hand, and caried to his lips. "Be assured sir," said Matilda, "the chance, as you call it, which brought us together, is to me most unpleasant, as I fear it has exposed me to greater freedom than I have ever been accustomed to." "And is it possible," said he, "you really feel an emotion of anger? Well I will relinquish my lovely captive, if she condescendingly promises to continue a few minutes longer, and grants me permission to attend her home." "I insist on being immediately released," ex-

claimed she. "I obey," cried he, softly pressing her hand, and then resigning it. "You are free; would to heaven I could say the same."

Matilda hurried towards the cottage: the stranger followed, "And why," cried he, "so impropitious to my wish of introduction? a wish it was impossible for me not to feel from the moment you were seen." She made no reply, but hurried on. Excercise diffused its softest bloom over her cheek; her fine hair fluttered in the breeze, and her eyes, with the beautiful embarrassment of modesty, were bent to the ground, to avoid the stranger's ardent gaze.

Ella now approached to meet her, but on seeing the stranger, started back in the utmost confusion. The stranger then kissing his hand retired, and the young women proceeded to the cottage.

"Oh Lord!" cried Ella, "how did you meet Mr. Wilmot?" "Mr. Wilmot," replied Matilda.—"Yes, himself indeed" said Ella, "and I never was more surprised than when I saw him with you, looking so soft, and so sweet upon you; to be sure he is a beautiful man, and besides that the master of Musehall." Matilda's spirits were greatly flurried when she heard that he was the proprietor of the mansion, where he had found her seated with so much composure as if she had been possessor of it.

When Ella informed her mother of the adventure, she was quite delighted at Matilda being seen by Mr. Wilmot; her beauty, she was convinced, must have excited his admiration, which might lead to something more important.

Mr. Wilmot was now in the prime of his life; his person was strikingly elegant, and his manners insinuating and pleasing. Though he had sometimes wandered from the boundaries of virtue, he had never yet entered on the empires of vice. He had never injured innocence, or wounded the bosom of a friend.

Among various accomplishments, he possessed an exquisite taste for music, consequently the soft, melodious voice of Matilda, aided by the charms of her face and person, were altogether irresistable. He had come into Wales to visit an old friend who resided in the Isle of Anglesey, but he did not mean to stop at Musehall. Within a few miles of it however his phaeton was overturned, and he severely hurt; in consequence of which he proceeded to the Hall

to put himself into the hands of the good old housekeeper, who possessed as great a stock of medical knowledge as Lady Bountiful herself.

The curiosity of Mr. Wilmot had been excited by meeting our heroine in his music-room; and he became solicitous to learn her real situation.

Next morning while Matilda was at breakfast a letter was brought to her; expecting to hear from her father she eagerly opened it, and to her great surprize perused the following lines.

To Miss Wilson.

"Mr. Wimot begs leave to assure Miss Wilson, that he shall feel dissatisfied with himself till he has an opportunity of personally apoligizing for his intrusion yesterday. If the sweetness of her disposition fulfils the promise her face has given of it, he flatters himself his pardon will be speedily accorded: yet, never shall he think himself entirely forgiven, if her visits to the library are discontinued. Happy and honoured shall Mr. Wilmot think himself if Musehall contains any thing which can amuse, or merit the attention of Miss Wilson."

"From Mr. Wilmot," exclaimed Matilda, with involuntary emotion, "well, this has astonished me." She then arose and going to the servant, desired him to tell his master, that she thanked him for his polite attention, but that in future it would not be in her power to go to the library.

About an hour afterwards two servants came from Musehall, to the cottage with a small bookcase, which they presented to Matilda, with their master's compliments, that in a few minutes he would have the honour of paying his respects to her.

Our heroine felt agitated at this message, but it was the agitation of involuntary pleasure. Mr. Wilmot entered the room where she sat, with an air at once easy and respectful, and taking her hand, besought forgiveness for his intrusion the preceding day. Matilda blushed, and expressed something of the confusion she had felt on being so surprised. Mr. Wilmot drew his chair close to her's, and said he had taken the liberty of sending her a few books to amuse her, till she again condescended to revisit the library, which he entreated her to do. She thanked him for his politeness, but declared she must be excused from going. He regarded her with looks of tender admiration.—Confused by his ar-

dent glances she turned over the leaves of a book she held in her hand, and in doing so, she saw written on the title-page, Lord Wilmot. "Lord Wilmot," repeated she, in astonishment. "Do you know him?" said Mr. Wilmot. "Not personally; but I revere, I esteem him; he is one of the best, the truest friends my father ever had." "O! as happy would his son be," exclaimed Mr. Wilmot, "were he capable of inspiring you with such sentiments as you avow for him." "His son?" repeated she, in a tone of surprise, and looking at Mr. Wilmot, "Yes," replied he, "is it then possible that you are ignorant of his being my father? Oh! suffer the friendship which our parents feel to be continued to their children."

Wilmot now enquired when the intimacy, between her father and his commenced, and where the former was? Matilda shrunk from these enquires. She reflected that without her father's permission she had no right to answer them, and that in a situation like his and her's, too much caution could not be observed. Wilmot then requested permission to renew his visit, and obtained her permission to attend her in the evening in a walk through part of his pleasure ground which she had not yet seen.

She kept her appointment, and found Wilmot not many yards distant from the cottage, impatiently waiting her approach. A brighter bloom than usual glowed upon her cheek as she listened to his ardent expressions of admiration: yet he did not confine himself to mere compliments, but conversed on various subjects. The eloquence of his language, the liveliness of his imagination, and the justness of his remarks, equally amused and interested his fair companion. There was indeed in his disposition and manners, that happy mixture of animation and softness, which at once amuses the fancy and attracts the heart; and never had Matilda experienced such minutes as she now passed with him.

After a most agreeable ramble through the diversified scenery which surrounded Musehall, twilight warned Matilda to return home. When they came near the cottage Mr. Wilmot entreated and obtained her permission to visit her sometimes of a morning. The reserve of Matilda gradually wore away, and from her knowlege of Mr. Wilmot's family, she considered him as more than a common acquaintance. Every delicacy which Musehall contained was daily

sent to the cottage, notwithstanding her prohibition to the contrary, and sometimes Mr. Wilmot was permitted to dine with her in the recess. Three weeks spent in this familiar manner attached them to each other more than months would have done, passed in situations liable to interruption.

On Mr Wilmot's first acquaintance with Matilda, he had been tempted to think she was involved in mystery. He imagined that some deviation from prudence, had, by depriving her of the favour of her friends, made her retire to obscurity. In consequence of these ideas he could not think himself culpable in encouraging the wishes her loveliness gave rise to. 'Tis true, he saw that she wore the semblance of innocence; but this could not remove his suspicions, so often had he seen it assumed, to hide the artful stratagems of a depraved heart.

Ah! why will lovely woman by levity and boldness lose all pretensions to the esteem, which would otherwise be an involuntary tribute. The rose which glows upon the day, is never so much sought as the rosebud enwrapt in foliage, "the retiring graces have ever been reckoned the most beautiful."

As Mr. Wilmot had never heard his father mention a person of the name of Wilson, he suspected little credit was to be given to her assertion of an intimacy between them, particularly as he saw her, whenever the subject was mentioned, shrinking from it in the greatest confusion.

These unfavourable ideas however, vanished when he had an opportunity of discovering her mental perfections. The purity which mingled in her sentiments, and the modesty which accompanied every word, filled him with delight. Esteem was now united with love, and respect with admiration. Ere he came to any final determination respecting Matilda, he resolved to try, and discover her real situation. He wrote to his sister, to request she would enquire from his father whether he knew a person of the name of Wilson, and what his situation and family was. But he was shocked when he received an answer informing him that Lord Wilmot never knew a person of the name of Wilson. His doubts revived, and he resolved to go and enquire from Matilda how, and when her father and his had become acquainted.

As a previous step however, he sent for her nurse, and interogated her respecting the young lady. Mrs. Edwin dropped only some hints, in which she expressed her sorrow for her lovely charge ; " Poor dear young lady," said she, " she is very unwilling to have her situation known, though she is not the first young creature that has met with a bad man, and shame and sorrow be upon him that distressed her and her father." Mr. Wilmot had heard enough, he dismissed Mitilda's nurse, as he was equally unable and unwilling to enquire any farther.

He now resolved to discontinue his visits to Matilda, and to banish her from his thoughts as unworthy of his regard. He sought in the gaitey of society to divert his chagrin, but all his efforts were ineffectual. At length he determined to see her again, and leaving the house of a Welch baronet, where he had dined with a large party, he took the road to the cottage.

Meanwhile poor Matilda was a prey to disquiet. The first day of Wilmot's abscence she felt uneasiness, and strove to dissipate it by supposing that business detained him. The next morning she remained at home, every moment expecting to behold him, when she heard one of her nurse's sons tell of all the company he had met going to Sir Francis Mostyn's, and among the rest Mr. Wilmot. Matilda's heart almost died within her at this intelligence. Pleasure and not business had prevented Mr. Wilmot from coming to her. She now condemned herself for ever having permitted his visits, or received his assiduities.

In the evening she walked out to indulge in solitary ramble the dejection of her heart. With slow and pensive steps she pursued her way regardless of surrounding objects, till an approaching footstep made her raise her eyes, and with equal surprize and confusion she beheld Mr. Wilmot.

Obeying the impulse of pride, she haistily turned away, till rscollecting that sort of precipitation would only betray her sentiments, she paused to listen to his passionate enquiries after her health : having answered them with coldness she again moved on, but her progress was stopt by Mr. Wilmot, who snatching her hand, insisted on knowing why she appeared so desirous of avoiding him. Pleased, yet blushing and confused, she heard Mr. Wilmot, with more energy than he had ever yet expressed himself with, declare the

pain he had suffered during his absence from her. From his ardent and passionate expressions, Matilda inferred that he intended by uniting his destiny to hers, to secure to himself a society he so highly valued. The idea was too pleasing to be received in tranquillity, and her whole soul was agitated while they pursued their way through the groves of Musehall.

A sudden shower compelled them to seek the shelter of the hall, which was nearer than the cottage. Wilmot throwing his arm round the waist of his fair companion hurried her into it, and immediately ordered tea and coffee. He then dismissed the attendants that he might without observation or restraint enjoy her society.

By the time tea was over, the evening began to clear up, and Matilda protested she must depart. Mr. Wilmot brought her to the window to convince her there was still a slight rain falling. He promised to see her home as soon as it was over, and entreated in the mean time, that she would gratify him with a song. She complied, but the raptures he expressed she thought too violent and rose from the piano, when she concluded, and insisted on going. "Tell me," cried Wilmot, gently circling her waist, "why this hurry, why this wish to leave me? Do you expect elsewhere to meet with a being who will value your society more highly than I do? Do you expect to meet with a heart more fondly, more firmly attached to you than mine? Matilda blushed and averted her eyes. "Ah! why," continued he "should we create uneasiness to ourselves by again separating?"

Matilda looked up with surprise in her countenance. Mr. Wilmot understood it: he saw she had hitherto deluded herself with thinking his intentions towards her very different from what they really were: to suffer her to deceive herself, would he thought be cruelty. Straining her to his breast, he imprinted a kiss on her lips, and softly told her that his life, which without her would lose its charms, should be devoted to her service: and that his fortune, like his heart, should be in her possession. Surprize and indignation, for a few moments, overpowered the mind of Matilda. She burst from his arms, and attempted to rush from the room, but Wilmot caught hold of her. "Whither are you going Matilda," exclaimed he. "From the basest of

men!" was the answer. He shut the door and forced her back to a chair: he was shocked, amazed, and confounded by her looks. The enlivening bloom of her cheeks was fled, and succeded by a death-like paleness; and her fine eyes, robbed of their lustre, were bent to the ground with the deepest expression of woe.

When she was able to speak she rose, and clasping her hands together, in a sudden agony of tears exclaimed, "Oh heavens! is it me, the helpless child of sorrow, Mr. Wilmot sought as a victim to illicit love! Is the son of Lord Wilmot destined to meditate such atrocity against the daughter of the unfortunate Berkley!"

Mr. Wilmot started, "Berkley!" repeated he, "Oh! Matilda, why did you conceal your real name? and what am I to infer from your having done so?" "What you please," cried she, "the opinion of a person I despise can be of little consequence to me, yet that you may have no plea for extenuating your conduct, know, that my name was concealed by the desire of my father, who involved in unexpected distress, wished me to adopt another, till his affairs were settled." "This concealment," said Wilmot, "has led me into an error that I shall never cease repenting. But cannot compunction extenuate this error?" "Tis not compunction, 'tis regret you feel, for finding your designs unsuccessful."

Matilda then retired from Musehall, and hastily returned to the cottage overwhelmed with sorrow. The charms which soothed her mind now fled; and while she glowed with keen resentment, she wept from disappointed tenderness.

But if she felt sorrow, Mr. Wilmot was a prey to all the pangs which an ingenuous mind, oppressed with a consciousness of error, must ever feel. The empire of inordinate passion was overthrown, and honour and reason regained their natural ascendency in his mind. He made several unsuccessful attempts for again seeing Matilda. He then wrote, but his letters were returned unopened. By a stratagem he at length effected an interview. Meeting one of the young Edwins returning from the first town with a letter, he enquired and heard it was for Miss Berkley. A little persuasion prevailed on the young man to relinquish it to Mr. Wilmot, who flew directly to the cottage. He refused to deliver the letter into any hand but

hers. "This sir," said Matilda, coming from her chamber, "is really cruel; but give me the letter." "Another condition remains to be complied with," cried he, "You must read it, Miss Berkley in my presence. Do you comply? "Yes," she replied, and received the letter from him.

It was from her father, and informed her, that Lord Wilmot on his return from France had discharged his debts and relieved him from all his embarrasments. The letter dropt from her trembling hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, she exclaimed, "Oh! bless him, gracious heaven, bless the benefactor of my father!" "And who," said Wilmot, "merits so sweet a prayer from Matilda? "See," cried she, presenting him the letter. He was affected on reading it, and the tears filled his eyes. He turned aside to hide his emotion—Miss Berkley arose as if with an intention of retiring, but he caught her hand. "Think not," said he, "I will lose the present opportunity of vindicating my conduct." She suffered him to seat himself beside her, and with fervent rapture found that he was still the amiable, the generous, the noble character her fancy had first conceived him to be.

Tears of pleasure dropt from her eyes; for oh! what delight is there in knowing, that an object we cannot help loving, we may still esteem. "Thus," continued Mr. Wilmot, "have I accounted for my error. To call you mine is the height of my wishes: on your decision I rest for happiness. Oh my Matilda! let it be favourable, and suffer me to write to Captain Berkley and request him to bestow on me, the greatest treasure an human being could possibly receive from another, a woman lovely, and educated, as you have been." When he mentioned applying to her father, Matilda could no longer doubt his sincerity. "I am forgiven then," said Wilmot, pressing her to his bosom, "Oh! my love, years of tender attention, can never make up for this goodness!"

Mr. Wilmot immediately wrote to her father, and as he sealed the letter, he told Matilda, he had requested an expeditious answer. The happiness of the youthful pair was communicated to the honest rustics of the cottage, whom Mr. Wilmot liberally rewarded for their fidelity to Matilda.

The day after the reconciliation Mr. Wilmot told Matilda he was compelled for a short time to leave her, and by the

time he returned, he hoped their would be a letter from her father to authorize his immediate preparations for their nuptials.

Matilda now saw herself on the point of being elevated to a situation, by a man whom she adored, that would give her ample opportunities of serving the dearest connections of her heart, of gratifying the benevolence of her disposition, and the elegance of her taste. Such were the ideas of the innocent and romantic Matilda, and which she entertained till experience convinced her of their fallacy.

As she was sitting in the recess in the garden, the fourth evening of Mr. Wilmot's absence, she heard the rattling of a carriage: her heart bounded, she flew into the house; at the very moment a chaise stopt at the door, from which, to her inexpressible amazement, her father descended. It was some moments before she had power to bid him welcome, or return the fond caresses he bestowed upon her. "I am come, Matilda," said he, "to take you away with me; and one hour is all I can give you to prepare yourself." "Good heaven," cried Matilda, "to take me away immediately!" "Immediately!" repeated he, and so great was his eagerness to depart, that he would not suffer the horses to be taken from the chaise. Matilda was handed to the carriage—Ella accompanied her—and all the travellers were equally, though differently, affected.

Our travellers proceeded to Holyhead, which place Captain Berkley announced as they entered it. And now Matilda first conceived the idea of being brought to another kingdom. Her father soon confirmed it, for as they alighted, he enquired when a packet would sail, and heard with evident pleasure, about six in the afternoon. Having ordered an early dinner, and dismissed Ella into another room; he seated himself by his daughter, and taking her hand, with a tender voice thus addressed her, "To give pain to your gentle heart has inflicted torture on mine; but honour compelled me to the conduct which I have adopted. On Lord Wilmot's arrival in town I sent him a letter: scarcely had he read it, when with all the ardour of real friendship, he came and conducted me to his house. His lordship then found a place which secured me competence without depriving me of independence. This was to accept of the agency of a considerable estate in the north

of Ireland. I accepted his generons offer, and soon found myself free from the power of Windham. I now felt a tranquillity I had long been a stranger to, and was busied preparing to come down to you, when the Honourable Mr. Wilmot's letter, like a clap of thunder, broke the happy calm I enjoyed. I shuddered to think that at the very period Lord Wilmot was building up my fortunes, the hopes he entertained for his darling son were in a way of being destroyed by a connexion of mine. Though you are dearer to me than the air I breath,—though the lovely child of my lost Matilda ; I would rather see you breathless at my feet, than by conscious or apparent meanness incur the censure of the world. Honour is the only hereditary possession that came to me uninjured ; to preserve it in the same state has ever been my unremitted study. It irradiated the gloomy morning of care, and I trust it will gild the setting hour of existence."

Matilda's emotion deprived her of speech. She sat like a pale statue listening to her father's firm and rapid language. He felt hurt at her silence, and rising abruptly, walked about the room with a disordered air, " I see—I see," cried he, " at last," looking mournfully upon her, " I am destined to be unhappy ; the little treasure which remained from the wreck of felicity, I had hoped—vain hope ; would have comforted and consoled me for what I had lost !"

" Oh my father !" exclaimed Matilda, suddenly starting and sighing deeply, " how you pierce my heart !" His pale and emaciated looks seemed to declare him sinking beneath a burden of care ; she started up, and flung herself into his arms ; " Dearest, best of fathers !" she exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs, " what is all the world to me in comparison with you ? Shall I put Mr. Wilmot, so lately a stranger, in competition with your happiness ? Oh, no ! I will henceforth try to regulate every impulse of my heart according to your wishes." Captain Berkley burst into tears ; the enthusiasm of virtue warmed them both. Hallowed are her raptures, and amply do they recompense the pain attendant on her sacrifices.

The evening was delightfully serene when they went on board, and by the dawn of next morning the vessel entered the bay of Dublin. Captain Berkley brought his daughter

from the cabin to contemplate a scene which far surpassed all her ideas of sublimity and beauty, and which the rising sun heightened with the most glowing radience. The approach to the city exhibited on each side, the lovely prospect of a country in the highest state of cultivation, interspersed with numerous villas.

The scene beginning at the water's edge to the northward of the bay, is continued along the coast, and gradually swells into gentle eminences. On the south a range of lofty mountains raise their towering curves and bound the horizon, and terminate to the south in the two beautiful Wicklow mountains, which from their conical form are called the sugar-loaves. Towards the west the hill of Howth appears in rocky sterility, except where it gradually slopes towards the fertile fields of Clentarf, and where it seems to partake of their verdure. This landscape so extensive and picturesque is not to be equalled by any rural scenery in Europe, except the bay of Naples, to which it bears a very striking resemblance.

Passing the lighthouse our adventurers landed at the marine hotel, where they breakfasted, and proceeded in a carriage to the hotel in capel-street, where they proposed to stay a few days, that they might enjoy the pleasure of Edward's company, as his regiment was quartered in Dublin barracks.

Their interview with Edward was delightful, and after visiting the most remarkable places in the Irish capital, Matilda supplied herself with a fashionable assortment for her wardrobe, a small collection of books, and every requisite for drawing. At the expiration of a week, our travellers parted with Edward, and pursued their journey to Clare castle, where they arrived on the second day after their departure from Dublin.

An old man and woman, who had the care of the castle, were apprized of their coming, and on the first approach of the carriage, opened the massy door, and waited to receive them. They were shewn into a large parlour furnished in an old fashioned manner, and found a comfortable supper prepared for them.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, Matilda ranged over the castle. It was a large gothic pile, and stood upon a rocky eminence overhanging the sea, and

commanding a prospect of the opposite coast of Scotland. Its interior was quite as gothic as its exterior. The stairs were winding, the galleries intricate, the apartments numerous, and mostly hung with old tapestry. Such was the retirement in which the youthful charms of the fair Matilda were secluded from the eye of her enamoured Wilmot, and the observation of the world.

Captain Berkley felt a pleasing serenity diffused over his mind, from the idea of being in some degree independent, and in the way of making some provision for his children. The cheerfulness of Matilda gradually returned. Her time was agreeably diversified by the sources of amusement she drew from herself; her father, whose supreme felicity consisted in contributing to her pleasure, had purchased a delightful harp for her in Dublin, and with its dulcet sounds she often not only charmed his spirits, but her own, from every mortal care.

Under Matilda's superintending care, the garden of the castle, which had long been neglected, soon lost its rude appearance. She often ascended the devious path of the mountain that stretched beyond the castle; and beheld the waves glittering in the sunbeams, from which she was sheltered by the foliage of the mountain-ash, the oak, and the hazel.

But no fanciful pleasures, no delightful rambles, no domestic avocations, made her forgetful of the calls of benevolence. She visited the haunts of poverty, and relieved the necessitous peasant to the utmost of her power. The wretchedness so often conspicuous among many of the labourious class, excited her surprize. Her father informed her, that the indigence of the peasants proceeded in a great degree from the emigration of their landlords. "Their wealth," said he, "is spent abroad, instead of enriching those from whom it was drawn.

"Nature in all her works is a glorious precedent to man; the plant enriches the soil from whence it springs; but man, while enslaved by dissipation, cannot hear the calls of humanity. To lighten the toils of labour, to cheer the child of poverty, to raise the drooping head of merit, these are superior to the feverish joys of dissipation, and the ostentation of wealth.

"Happiness is forsaken by the fashionable world, for a gaudy phantom, called pleasure, she is seldom grasped but

for a moment, yet in that moment has power to fix the invenomed sting of remorse in the breast. On the other hand, the heart, which delights in domestic joys, which rises in gratitude to the Heavens, which melts at human woe, that heart can alone experience true pleasure."

In this state of rural tranquillity did Captain Berkley and his daughter pass their days, till the arrival of a distant relation of his wife, in the neighbourhood, again separated Matilda from her father.

Lady Westbrook, accompanied by her daughter Charlotte, came to reside for a few weeks on their estate, which lay contiguous to that of Clare-castle. In the course of a morning ride they visited the castle, and were received by Captain Berkley with the greatest politeness. Her ladyship instantly recognized the features of Berkley, as she had often seen him at the castle of her brother, Lord V——, before his clandestine marriage with the unfortunate Lady Matilda.

After the first emotions of surprize had subsided, her Ladyship expressed her esteem for the character of Berkley, and invited him to return her visit. Charmed with her condescension, he complied, and in a few weeks the most friendly intercourse was continued between the two families. Lady Westbrook was delighted with Matilda, whose features, form, and accomplishments reminded her of her mother. When she prepared to leave the neighbourhood and return to London, she proposed to Captain Berkley, to take his daughter into her protection, and promised to provide for her as for one of her own children.

This proposal was gratifying to Berkley, as whatever sorrow he might feel at the absence of his child, would be more than compensated by the reflection, that she was in a state of happiness. Matilda opposed Lady Westbrook's proposal from the fear that her absence might prove injurious to the health of her beloved parent; but the Captain to induce her to comply with an offer, which he thought highly advantageous, assured her that in her absence he would partake of the amusements of the country, which he had hitherto declined on her account. This assertion prevailed upon her to consent, and immediate preparations were made for the journey.

As she went by Holyhead, Berkley determined on sending Ellen to her parents. As the hour approached of quitting her father, the reluctance of Matilda increased: nor were his feelings less oppressive, though better concealed. Lady Westbrook hinted to her nephew the injury he was doing his daughter by such emotions, and assured him of her unremitting attention to the happiness of his child, who would, accompanied by her, revisit him at Clare-castle the following summer. This last consideration composed the Captain. He handed them to her Ladyship's carriage, and sighing an adieu, returned to his solitary habitation, to pray for his children.

Two days after the arrival of Lady Westbrook, her daughter, and Matilda, in Dublin, they embarked for England, landed at Holyhead, and the next morning pursued their journey.

They stopped for the night at an inn, about a mile from Muselhall, and Matilda, with Lady Westbrook's permission, accompanied Ellen to her parents. Here she parted with her faithful servant and nurse, and returned to the inn.

Late in the evening of the third day, Lady Westbrook and her fellow travellers arrived at Pall-Mall, where her Ladyship's agent had previously taken lodgings for them.

Soon after Lady Westbrook's return to the metropolis, she introduced Matilda to her fashionable friends, as a distant relation. At a large party to which her Ladyship was invited, at the Marquis of T——'s, in Portman square, she introduced her fair protege to Lord Wilmot, who received her with his characteristic benignity, as the daughter of his friend. "My dear young lady," said he, "allow me to express the pleasure I feel, at seeing the daughter of my worthy friend, Captain Berkley; allow me also to increase that pleasure, by presenting Miss Berkley to Lady Emma Wilmot, and desiring their friendship for each other."

Delighted by notice so little expected, the heart of Matilda palpitated with emotion; her cheeks mantled with blushes, and the tears of sensibility trembled in her eye. She expressed her acknowledgements to his Lordship for his attention, and assured him she had been early taught, and sensibly felt the claims he had upon her gratitude, and respect. He bowed, and left her seated by his daughter,

who ezpressed her pleasure at being introduced to her in the sweet accents of affability, and tenderness.

Thus was the fair Matilda, evidently placed amidst the relatives of her beloved Mr. Wilmot. Her bosom glowed with the most delicious emotions, and she every moment expected to see him enter the apartment. Yet the abruptness of her departure from Musehall, she feared, had excited his anger, and her fond heart alternately trembled with apprehension, and was cheered with hope.

On entering the drawing room, accompanied by her lovely young friend, the first object that met her eyes, was the honourable Mr. Wilmot. His father advanced and taking her trembling hand introduced her. Wilmot bowed and approached to pay his compliments. The unexpected arrival of Matilda in London, astonished, and notwithstanding his resentment, delighted him. They both avoided each other during the remainder of the evening, but Mr. Wilmot having discovered that Matilda was entrusted to the protection of Lady Westbrook, her relation, he resolved to visit her in Pall-Mall, and insist on an explanation of her precipitate retreat from Musehall.

On his arrival at the house of Lady Westbrook, finding her Ladyship was out, he ascended to the drawing room, where he found Matilda alone and reading.

In the emotion of surprize, at so unexpected a visit, the book dropt from her hand, and she arose in sensible agitation. Mr. Wilmot apoligized for his abrupt intrusion. He took her trembling hand, and leading her to a sofa, placed himself beside her. He related the agonies he suffered on returning to Muschall, and finding her absent; and concluded with assuring her that notwithstanding his incentitude and anxiety, his tenderness for her had known no diminution. Matilda informed him of the reason of her precipitate departure from Wales, and touched on the wretchedness she had suffered by their separation, with a delicacy that convinced him she had sympathized in his uneasiness.

Matilda now appeared dearer to Wilmot than ever; pleasure beamed from his eyes as he pressed her to his bosom, and exclaimed, "I may again call you mine; again sketch scenes of felicity, and call on you to realize them That my father will throw obstacles in the way of our union, I have reason to believe; though truly noble and generous

in his nature, he is sometimes like the rest of mankind, influenced by motives of interest. He has long set his heart upon my union with a young lady of a considerable fortune; and though fully determined in my intentions, I have hitherto forborne an explicit declaration of them." "Oh! sir," cried Matilda, interrupting him, "let me not be the unfortunate cause of disturbing the harmony of your family; comply with the wishes of Lord Wilmot, and let me be forgotten."

"Matilda," replied he, "convinced as I am of the dissimilarity between my father's inclinations and mine, I think it better to give no intimation of my present intentions, which if sanctioned by you, I am determined on fulfilling. Our peculiar circumstances will I trust induce my Matilda to excuse a temporary concealment of it, till beyond the power of mortals to separate us. Deem me not too precipitate if I ask you to morrow night, for the last sweet proof of confidence you can give me, by putting yourself under my protection: a journey to Scotland is unavoidable."

"Mention it no more," said Matilda, in a faltering accent, "no longer delude your imagination, or mine, with the hopes of being united," she trembled, and unable to support herself, sunk on her chair, while tears proclaimed her agony. Alarmed at her emotion, he entreated to know the cause of it, and the reason of her expressions. "Because," exclaimed she, "I cannot consent to a clandestine marriage. Any sacrifice, sir, compatable with virtue, and filial duty, most willingly would I make; but beyond these limits I must not step."

"Do not be too inflexible, Matilda." cried Mr. Wilmot, "nor suffer too great a degree of refinement to involve you in wretchedness; I have an aunt, the only remaining sister of my father, a generous, tender woman. I have ever been her particular favourite. She is now in the country, I will write immediately, inform her of our situation, and entreat her to come up to town to use her influence with my father in our favour." The heart of Matilda was cheered by this proposal; Wilmot wiped away her tears, and they talked with pleasure of future days. Mr. Wilmot expressed his wish to have Captain Berkley a constant resident with them, and was proceeding to mention some alterations at

Musehall, when he was interrupted by the return of Lady Westbrook.

In the evening a plain looking woman was shewn into the room, where Lady Westbrook and Matilda were sitting, and the latter instantly recognized her to be the person, at whose house she and her father had lodged on quitting Devonshire, to secret themselves from Colonel Windham. She was vexed at seeing this woman who had been bribed by the Colonel, and forced several letters from him upon her. She arose and left the room, and the woman who had formerly been housekeeper to Lady Westbrook, informed her Ladyship, that about a year before, Miss Berkley had been a lodger of her's, as also an old officer, whom she called her father. That Miss was followed by a set of gallants, amongst the rest by Colonel Windham, a sad rake, whom she believed to be the favourite; and that Miss suddenly went off nobody knew where, though it might easily be guessed she did not travel alone.

Lady Westbeook did not give implicit credit to this story. The character of Captain Berkley, and the uniform propriety of his daughter's conduct made her suspect this tale originated in malice. However, the passion for scandal that predominates in some minds urged this Lady to propagate this malignant fabrication, even at the expence of her nephew's child!

Accordingly she waited on Lady Wilmot, and communicated the tale, to the great joy of that imperious woman, who now had a fine opportunity to blast the reputation of poor Matilda, and throw an insuperable bar between her and Mr. Wilmot.

Fertile in expedients, these diabolical women concerted measures with Colonel Windham, who one evening while Matilda was on a visit at Lord Wilmot's, took the opportunity of presenting himself before her, during the absence of the other ladies, who had taken a walk to Hyde Park, leaving Matilda engaged with the pages of a favourite author.

While her attention was deeply engaged with an affecting story, she heard a sudden noise, and on raising her head she beheld, with equal surprise and terror, the miscreant Colonel Windham. She started up and rushed towards the door, but he caught her in his arms, and forced her back to a sofa.

"Neither cries nor struggles will avail," said he, "as without the assistance of a friend, you may be convinced I could not have entered this house. Matilda shuddered at the idea of treachery, "Your scheme, Colonel Windham," said she, "is equally vile and fertile, for though treachery brought you here, I shall find protection under the roof of my father's friend. If therefore you wish to preserve the semblance of honour retire without further delay.

As she spoke she started from her seat. Windham again seized her hand; at this moment a loud knocking was heard at the hall door. It announced the return of Lady Wilmot, and her party, and with horror poor Matilda saw, that the ladies would be too apt to rejoice at an opportunity like the present, for traducing her fame. She saw that appearances, even in the eye of candour, would be against her. Half wild with the idea, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "I am ruined for ever." "No, no!" cried the perfidious Windham. "I see your principles are invincible; I admire, I revere your purity, and never more will I attempt to injure it. You will be ruined if I be seen with you; the malicious devils you live with would never believe our united asservations of your innocence. Conceal me therefore if possible till the family are settled, the person who let me in will then secure my retreat.

Matilda pointed to a closet, Windham entered it and closed the door softly after him. The ladies entered, "What ails you child," cried Lady Westbrook, "why you look as pale as if you had seen a ghost?" "You are certainly ill," said Mr. Wilmot, with a voice expressive of regret, "you have been indulging melancholy ideas I fear," continued he, softly taking her hand. She attempted to speak: the contending emotions of her mind prevented her utterance, and the tears trickled silently down her cheeks.

One of the ladies who complained of a violent head-ache, recollecting as she said that there was a bottle of Eau-de-luce in the closet. She entered it, but with a loud scream instantly rushed from it, followed by Colonel Windham.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Wilmot, rising precipitately. Matilda looked round, she beheld every eye fastened on her with amazement, and contempt. She faintly exclaimed, "I am betrayed!" and sunk back on the sofa.

Mr. Wilmot started at her exclamation, he struck his forehead in an agony, and rushed out of the room.

Thus by the machinations of female envy and malevolence, was the reputation and happiness of an innocent and beautiful young woman blasted.

The unhappy innocent was compelled to leave the dwelling of Lord Wilmot immediately, and Lady Westbrook with well dissembled earnestness, lamented that she had ever taken such a vicious being as Matilda under her protection.

Lord Wilmot, who thought that Matilda's return to London had been a scheme of Captain Berkley, to prevail over the weakness of Mr. Wilmot, and exasperated at what he considered a complication of treachery and ingratitude, wrote to him, upbraiding him with perfidy, and desiring him to resign the agency of his estate into the hands of a person whom he named.

Meanwhile poor Matilda, rejected alike by all her former friends, except Mr. Wilmot, resolved to leave London, and return to the protection of her father. In this determination she was encouraged by her affectionate friend Mr. Wilmot, who though he was firmly persuaded of her seduction, he still cherished a tender compassion for one, he still held so dear, and sent a faithful servant to see her safe on board the packet at Parkgate.

The packet sailed for Dublin in the afternoon, and on the evening of the second day Matilda was landed at the marine hotel. She immediately sent to engage a place in the northern mail coach, and set out for Clare-castle the same evening.

On the second day, about eight o'clock in the evening, she arrived at the nearest town to the castle, for which she procured a chaise and set off. On her arrival she found the Castle inhabited only by an old woman, who first communicated to her the doleful tidings of her father's misfortune. The servant informed her, that when Captain Berkley recieved the letter of dismission from Lord Wilmot, he settled the accounts of the servants and paid them off. He then prepared to set out for England, and every thing was got ready for his departure, but in the middle of the following night, he was seized with spasms in his stomach. He thought himself dying, and rung the bell. Felix, the only

servant who remained with the old woman, went up to the Captain, and gave him a little brandy, which revived his spirits. He grew a little easier towards morning, but was too weak to think of proceeding on his journey. This consideration gave him unutterable anguish. He got up, wrote a large packet, which he sent by Felix to the post-office; packed up some things in a trunk, and put his seal upon his desk.

Captain Berkley then left the castle, and went to lodge in an adjacent cabin. Matilda, on her arrival, hastened to his humble lodgings, and was conducted by the wife of a peasant to a small apartment, where her father lay sick on a miserable flock-bed.

As she entered this wretched asylum of her worthy parent, she was ready to expire with sorrow. Captain Berkley was raised in his bed, and his arms extended to receive her; she threw herself into them, and tears more expressive than words, evinced their feelings. Berkley first recovered the power of utterance! "My prayer." said he, "is granted. Heaven has restored my child to smooth this pillow of sicknes, and sooth the last moments of existence." "Oh! my father," cried the lovely girl, "have pity on me, and mention not those moments; exert yourself for your child: who in this world has she but thee, to comfort, support and befriend her?"

The night was now far advanced, and her father requested her to retire to rest. Next morning Matilda placed the tea-table by the bed-side, and gave her father his breakfast. Whilst receiving it from her hand, his eyes were raised to heaven, in thankful gratitude, for the inestimable blessing he still possessed in such a child.

After breakfast he said he would rise, and Matilda retired to a small garden till he was dressed. When informed by one of the peasant's children that the Captain was ready to receive her, she hastened in, and found him seated on an old chair. He appeared reduced to a skeleton, and seemed already on the very brink of the grave. Her agony was inexpressible. She mentioned a physician, and to sooth her mind he consented that one should be called in.

Matilda hastened to the castle, and entreated Felix to go to the neighbouring town next morning for a physician. He was punctual, and next day the doctor appeared at the cabin.

The physician informed Matilda in private, that her father was in a dangerous situation, and prescribed some medicines, which were soon procured by Felix, who was an old soldier, and whose attachment to Captain Berkley was strong and faithful.

A fortnight passed in this state of suspense. At the expiration of which, the Captain was considerably altered for the worse. He complained of no pain or sickness, but seemed sinking beneath a gradual decay. His conversation with his daughter was calculated to strengthen her fortitude, and resignation, and prepare for an approaching melancholy event, the least hint of which rendered her agony inexpressible, But pity for her feelings could not prevent her father from using every opportunity that occurred, for laying down rules and precepts, which might be serviceable to her when without a guide or protector.

The evening was fine, the sun was setting in all its glory, and the sea, illumined by its parting beams, looked like a sheet of silver. "What a lovely scene," cried Captain Berkley faintly, "with what majesty does the sun retire from the world; the calmness which attends its departure is such, I think, as must attend the exit of a good man." He paused a few minutes, then raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Merciful power! had it pleased thee, I could have wished yet a little longer to have been spared to this young creature; but thy will, not mine, be done; confiding in thy mercy, I leave her with some degree of fortitude."

He then bid her assure her brother, that he had his father's blessing, "the only legacy," said he, "I can leave him, but one I am confident he merits, and will value; to you my daughter he will prove a friend and guardian. Providence is just in all its dispensations, and will yet, I trust, render my dear children happy."

He appeared exhausted by speaking, and Matilda assisted him to lie down, entreating him to take a few drops of a cordial. He consented, and as she was pouring them out at a little table, she heard him groan.—The bottle dropt from her hand, she hastened to the bed, and found her father dead.

Her sorrow deprived her of sensation; she fainted on the dead body of her parent, and in that state was found by the

peasant's wife, and the compassionate Felix, who assisted to recover her, and convey her to another apartment.

While the desolate and virtuous orphan was paying the last mournful duties to the remains of her father, her love, now Lord Wilmot, was hastening on the wings of the wind to her relief. A few days after her departure from London, his father was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired in a few minutes. His title and extensive estates, consequently devolved on Mr. Wilmot, who immediately after the interment of the old Lord, incited by the most generous emotions of friendship, and love, travelled post to reinstate Captain Berkley in his employment, and claim the hand of his ever dear Matilda.

The evening of the fourth day after Captain Berkley's decease, was fixed upon for his interment. With streaming eyes, and a bosom swelling with anguish, poor Matilda beheld him put into the coffin. A small procession attended, consisting of the people of the house, Felix, and a number of respectable farmers, to whom Berkley had endeared himself, during his residence at Clare-castle. The men had scarfs and hatbands, and the women hoods.

Felix, who had been a soldier in his youth, resolved to pay the deceased some military honours, and placed his hat and sword upon the coffin. Matilda supported the preparations for his removal; but when she saw the coffin raised to be taken out; she could no longer restrain her feeling—she shrieked in the agony of her soul; and fell fainting into the arms of the women who rurounded her. In this state she was conveyed to the castle, and put to bed in an elegant apartment, under the care of an old female servant.

Meanwhile her lover landed at Dublin, and travelled post on horseback, attended only by his own man. When he came within a mile of Clare-castle he met the funeral procession, which attended the body of Captain Berkley to the grave. His Lordship stopped to let them pass, and just behind the coffin, he beheld Felix, who with much surprise in his countenance, stepped up to him, and informed him whose remains he was following. "Captain Berkley dead!" exclaimed Lord Wilmot, with a face as pale as death, and a faltering voice, while his heart sunk within him at the idea, that his father was in some degree accessary to the fatal event. "Yes sir," said Felix, wiping away a tear, "and

he has not left a better, or a braver man behind him. Poor gentleman, the world pressed hard upon him."

Lord Wilmot was shocked, he wished to hide his emotions, and waved his hand to Felix to depart. As soon as the procession was out of sight, he alighted and took a path across the fields, which brought him to the church-yard, where Berkley was to be interred.

He reached it just as the coffin was lowering into the grave, a yew tree hid him from observation. He heard many of the farmer's mention the merits of the deceased, in terms of warm, though artless commendation, and he saw Felix receive the hat and sword, which he had laid on the coffin, with a flood of tears.

When the church-yard was cleared, Lord Wilmot stepped across the broken wall to the grave of Berkley. The scene was wild, and dreary, and a lowering evening seemed in unison with the sad objects around.

He shed some tears upon the soldier's grave, and turned manfully from it towards the castle. Here Felix was arrived before him, and had a fire lighted up in the dressing room, which poor Matilda on coming to the castle had chosen for herself. Lord Wilmot entered the room with a palpitating heart; in a few words he informed Felix of the decease of his father; but how great was his surprise and pleasure to find that the lovely mistress of his heart was then in the castle.

Delicacy of sentiment, and the dread of increasing her indisposition by an abrupt appearance before her, prevented him from rushing to the apartment where she lay; he gave a strict charge to the servants to send for a physician, and pay her every attention.

Next morning he was silently conducted to the apartment, in which the unfortunate Matilda lay. He advanced to the couch, and was not little shocked on seeing her eyes closed, concluding from this that she had fainted away. Her easy respiration soon convinced him that this was a mistake; and leaned over her till she began to move, and then retreated behind her, lest his presence on her first awaking should alarm her.

As Matilda arose from the couch much refreshed, she heard a deep sigh behind her. She turned her head hastily and beheld Lord Wimot. Trembling and astonished, she sunk upon a seat, and exclaimed, "Gracious heaven! what

can have brought Mr. Wilmot hither?" "To try," replied he, in a soothing voice, "whether Miss Berkley will yet consider me as a friend." "My forgiveness is yours indeed," softly, sighed she, "though your former suspicions wounded me to the soul. But indeed I can scarcely wonder at your entertaining them, when I reflect on the situation in which I was found."—Lord Wilmot interrupted her, by informing her of the decease of his father, and his consequent independence. "The time is now come," exclaimed he, in an animated tone, "when I can do justice to the merits of Matilda." A sudden flush of surprize for a moment illumined her countenance. She briefly informed his Lordship of her father's residing in Devonshire after the death of her mother, of the manner in which they became acquainted with Colonel Windham, with the other circumstances, which have been already mentioned. Delighted with her simple exculpation of her character, he pressed her to comply with his wishes, by accepting his hand. This she refused, both on account of the death of her father, and from the conscious pride of innocence, which required that Lord Wilmot should trace, and expose the source of treachery practised against her, at his father's house in London. This he solmnly engaged to perform, on condition that she accompanied him to Wales, where he whould leave her till the solemnization of their nuptials.

The lovely Matilda blushed consent, and as soon as her health was restored, Felix engaged a farmer's daughter to accompany her, as a travelling companion, while his Lordship followed them.

All things being prepared to their mutual satisfaction, Matilda quitted Clare-castle with eyes overflowing with tears on recollecting her recent loss. She arrived in Dublin and first communicated the sorrowful intelligence of their father's death to Edward. Lord Wilmot was introduced by his sister to young Berkley, who expressed the warmest gatitude to his Lordship for his generous and affectionate conduct towards his sister. He saw Matilda and his Lordship with their attendants on board the packet, and promised to visit them in England when his duty would permit.

Our voyagers landed at Holyhead, and pursued their journey to Musehall. Their first visit was to the cottage, where Matilda's nurse was alone, and employed at knitting. She started up in amazement, and welcomed her dear child to

Wales, and after some conversation they proceeded to Musehall, where his Lordship's housekeeper was ready to receive them.

After a most affectionate adieu, Lord Wilmot set out for London, with a promise to write often, and to return and claim the hand of his beloved, as soon as the time of mourning for her father was expired. Matilda felt the most tender regret on his departure, but the attentions of her rural friends, and the pleasing expectation of soon being united to the man she loved, operated like a cordial to her spirits.

At the end of a week she received a letter from Lord Wilmot, expressive at once of his generosity, esteem, and tenderness; and he communicated to her the pleasing intelligence, that he had traced and exposed the malignancy of her enemies, whose envy of her superior beauties, and virtues appeared to have actuated them in their treacherous defamation. He mentioned that his mother and sister longed to be reconciled to her, and looked forward with pleasure to that period, when she might be considered one of the family.

The romantic beauties of an old castle overhung an eminence at its extremity; and of the whole scene she had taken a most accurate copy. It wanted but one charm to please her, and that was the figure of Lord Wilmot, with whom she had often wandered round the ruins.

Her hand was ready in obeying the impulse of her heart, and she soon beheld sketched in the most striking manner, the elegant features of him she so ardently loved. She gazed with rapture upon them, "Oh how unnecessary," she exclaimed, "to sketch features, which are indelibly engraven on my heart."

Just as she spoke, she heard the rattling of a carriage; in a few minutes Lord Wilmot's coach drove into the court; he decended with rapidity from the vehicle, and a moment brought him to her arms.

After congatulations, Lord Wilmot begged leave to introduce his mother and sister to his Matilda, and in turning her eyes towards the court, she beheld them alight from another coach, accompanied by a young officer, whom she recognized at the first glance to be her brother.

In the afternoon, while Captain Berkley accompanied Lord Wilmot's mother and sister in a ramble through the sylvan

scenes that adorned the demesne: his Lordship had a private interview with his Matilda. He clasped her to his heart, 'Dearest loveliest of human beings," he exclaimed, "shall I at length call you mine, after all my sorrows, and difficulties, shall I indeed receive so precious a reward." The soft blushes of Matilda was her only reply. He urged her not to defer his happiness, proposed to procure a licence, and entreated her to consent, that the marriage should take place on the following day. Matilda held out her hand as a token of acquiescience, but the tumultuous emotions of love and joy prevented her utterance. He pressed the precious pledge of his felicity to his lips, and to his heart; and to tranquillize her mind, proposed a short walk to meet their visitors.

Next morning Matilda was dressed in her bridal ornaments by her old attendant Ellen. She came from her dressing room, "blushing like the morn," and was attended by the ladies, her brother, and Lord Wilmot to the church. Some kind hand had strewed her mother's grave with flowers, and when Matilda reached it, she paused for a moment, and secretly invoked the spirits of her parents, to bless their union.

The parson was already in the church, and the ceremony was begun without delay. With the truest pleasure did Captain Berkley give his lovely sister to Lord Wilmot, who received her with the liveliest transport, as the choicest gift heaven could bestow. Tears of sweet sensibility fell from the modest eyes of the blushing bride, as Lord Wilmot folded her to his bosom, as his own Matilda. Nor was he less affected, joy agitated his soul at the completion of an event so earnestly desired. He gently wiped away her tears, and when she had received the congratulations of her brother and the ladies, the little party returned to Musehall.

Bridal favours and presents had been distributed among the children of Lady Wilmot's nurse; the parson was handsomely complimented on the occasion, and money distributed among the indigent villagers. The happinuss of Lord Wilmot and his bride was now complete, and the tender and virtuous Matilda forgot all her misfortune in the blissful endearments of chaste connubial love.

THE END.

FERNANDO OF CASTILE,

OR THE

HUSBAND OF TWO WIVES.

SOON after hostilities had ceased between the Moors and Spaniards, and peace put a period to one of the most sanguinary wars that ever was recorded by the pen of the historian, Don Antonio, who held an exalted station in the Spanish army, and who by his valourous atchievements had deserved the approbation of his country, seized an opportunity of returning to Castile; where, on his arrival at the Castello d'Ovaldos, he found his beloved Aurora, (the wife of his bosom,) and the youthful Carlos, (the fond pledge of a union founded on mutual affection,) waiting his arrival; and, no sooner had he sounded the bugle, than the gate flying open discovered to his enraptured sight the dear objects of his love, standing with anxious expectation without the portal. He vaulted lightly from his saddle, and the next moment found himself in the arms of Aurora; whilst Carlos, uttering a shout of joy, embraced his knees. To describe the scene which followed would be needless, since the extatic bliss of meeting a beloved object after a long separation is an occurrence which often takes place, during the connubial life. To those who have experienced that pleasure we leave the portraiture of the meeting between Antonio and his family; suffice it to say, that the residue of that day and several others was dedicated to mirth and hilarity, when the castle became one scene of festive revelry.

Antonio, elated with having once more reached the seat of his ancestors in safety, proclaimed a feast and tournament in commemoration thereof, at which were present some of the most distinguished persons in the Spanish kingdom, as well as several valiant knights from other parts of Europe; who, eager to share in the princely sports of the day, had hastened hither from the capital. The deeds of chivalry performed on this occasion were great, and worthy of those who had engaged therein. The conflict between the contending parties was long and arduous; victory, however, though she hung long dubious over the martial scene, at length declared Fernando of Castile, the hero of the day's diversion; in consequence of which, he was led to the spot where the fair Aurora sat to distribute the palm of victory. The matchless beauty of that lady for a moment rivetted him to the spot, as it were, with astonishment; his whole frame became agitated, and his bosom heaved with emotions that he had never before experienced. In fine, her charms instantly inspired him with a lawless passion, and nothing but the conviction of being surrounded by the friends of Antonio prevented his making an instant declaration of his passion. Possessed of a person elegant and beautiful in the extreme, accomplished manners and a tongue well stored with flattery, he imagined every woman struck therewith; and, being a universal lover of the sex, although married, he left no means untried, however base, to effect his purpose; nevertheless, he contrived, by a well acted duplicity, to conceal this lascivious trait in his character from the world, dreading nothing so much as being detected in his amours: to avoid which, he became dependant on the caprice of the miscreants whom he employed on those nefarious occasions; which, together with the upbraidings of his conscience, to which he was not totally insensible, often caused him to repent severely, in his calmer moments, the crimes he had thus rashly committed.

Such was the character of Fernando, who acted his part so artfully, that the real cause of his emotions (which he could not altogether conceal from the surrounding company) was not once suspected, as they attributed them to the extraordinary exertions he had used during the arduous conflicts he had been engaged in. Thus he found no difficulty in securing at once the friendship of Antonio and his lovely consort, who, won by an artfully-displayed hilarity, general

knowledge, and affable demeanour, considered him as the master-jewel of the brilliant circle which surrounded the festive board: nor was he less esteemed by the company than themselves; for, though he had succeeded in the governorship of Castile, he assumed no superiority over his companions in arms, although both by birth and title he might have been very justly entitled to do so. This affected humility suited his purpose, and was the veil (with him) that covered many faults.

Pleased with each other, the company thought not of separating until the streaks of light in the eastern hemisphere proclaimed the approach of morn; when they retired to their respective chambers, in order to retrace in their dreams the martial deeds of the preceding day. Not so Fernando: under the pretence of having business of importance to transact, he quitted the Castello d'Ovaldos as soon as the assembly broke up, but not without receiving a pressing invitation, on the part of Antonio and his wife, to renew his visit as soon and as often as he could make it convenient; so much were they prepossessed in his favour; which request he very courteously promised to comply with, pretending to have conceived as great a friendship for them as they had done for him. During the time spent in returning from the Castello d'Ovaldos to his residence, the Palais de St. Marco, his whole thoughts were bent on the charming consort of Antonio. The bewitching manner with which she bestowed on him the symbol of victory, together with the mental endowments she displayed whilst doing the honours of the festive board, all occurred to his memory and served to rivet more strongly the passion which her external beauty had inspired. In fine, his whole soul became inflamed with a strong desire of possessing a jewel of such high estimation. A thousand plans presented themselves to his mind; but, convinced of the virtue and integrity of the fair object, he instantly rejected them, convinced that nothing but time, perseverance, and artifice, could gain him possession of the lovely prize. In this state of mind he arrived at the mansion of his ancestors, where he immediately retired to his chamber; but, even there, the form of Aurora intruded itself on his imagination. Exhausted with fatigue, he soon sunk into the arms of sleep; but his slumbers were broken and restless: fancy presented to his view the new object of his affection in a thousand variegated forms; at one moment treating him

with the greatest contempt, and the next kindly complying with his wishes. Thus perturbed during the silent moments dedicated to repose, he arose, ere the sun had attained its meridian height, jaded and unrefreshed. From this moment he treated the amiable Lorenza, his illustrious consort, with a species of contempt, which, though not strictly manifest to those around them, served to wound severely the heart of the person against whom it was directed; who, though she refrained remonstrating with him on the sudden change in his behaviour towards her, secretly pined at losing the affections of a man whom she doated on.

In the mean time, Antonio and Fernando became in a manner inseparable companions. Their intimacy being such, that, whenever the one entered any public assembly, he was looked on as the harbinger of the other's approach: thus they were soon known throughout Castile by the appellation of the twin friends. The Castello d'Ovaldos became the constant resort of Fernando, when affairs of state afforded him a leisure opportunity; nor did he suffer his partiality to rest here, it extended even to the youthful Carlos, in the charge of whose education he with much difficulty prevailed on them to let him bear a part, as well as place him under an able master. Thus domesticated, as it were, with Antonio and his charming family, he had frequent opportunities of observing the natural good qualities of Aurora: all conspired to rivet still stronger the chains which held his heart in durance, whilst every visit added fresh fuel to the fire which raged within his breast. In fine, every leisure moment was spent at the Castello d'Ovaldos, where, by an affected affability and pretended benevolent disposition, he became necessary in a manner to the very existence of the infatuated possessors of Ovaldos, who felt for him all that species of affection which exists between persons born of the same parents; whilst their delighted eyes, turning towards futurity, contemplated with extatic pleasure the prospect which hope held out in regard to the advancement of their son, resulting from the predilection Fernando had artfully shewn for him. Looked on in the Castello d'Ovaldos as one of the family, Fernando found frequent opportunities of conversing tête-à-tête with the amiable and unsuspecting Aurora; on which occasions, he cunningly introduced, as if it were by chance, anecdotes illustrative of conjugal infidelity, as well male as female; sometimes artfully inveigh-

ing against the atrocity of the crime, but oftener pitying the victims whom he painted as suffering through the blind decrees of fate; who had either linked them to objects unworthy their regard, or bound them in the hymeneal fetters before they were capable of judging for themselves. This he did on purpose to sound the inclinations of Aurora, and gain if possible a full knowledge of her sentiments: nay, he even went farther, and ventured to expatiate on the sufferings of those, who, although conscious of their error, impelled forward by the irresistible impulse of mutual passion, have been blindly hurried into the very abyss of guilt and misery; not forgetting also to comment in the tenderest terms on the pangs which rent the hearts of those, who were so unfortunate as to fix their affections on an unattainable object. During the introduction of these subjects, Fernando carefully observed the countenance of Aurora, in order if possible to discover the effects which his conversation produced on her passions; but no ray of hope appeared to sanction the base design his crafty soul had plotted; his narrations were occasionally interrupted by the pertinent remarks of Aurora, who displayed therein a profound veneration for the duties of matrimonial life, at the same time declaring, in the strongest terms, her abhorrence of the smallest infringement of the sacred laws attached thereto. With sentiments like these, Fernando well knew it was useless to encounter. Virtue in her shone too resplendent for vice, however malignant, to shade its lustre for a moment; and, thus foiled in the plan he had formed of undermining her virtue, he began to despair of the attainment of those desires he had suffered to gain the ascendancy over his reason. A settled melancholy now succeeded to his wonted vivacity; discontent lowered upon his brow, and in every respect he was so much altered as scarcely to be recognised for the once sprightly and fascinating Fernando of Castile.

He even now shunned the company of Antonio and his lovely partner, seizing every opportunity of wandering through the shady retreats of a forest which lay near the Castello d'Ovaldos. Here in secret he pondered over the means of conquering that virtue, which, for the first time, had foiled all his projected happiness. The recollection, that in Aurora he had found a well-defended barrier, capable of resisting his most determined attack, drove him to

desperation. Frantic with rage and disappointment, a thousand ideas, each more horrid than its predecessor, now obtruded themselves on his perturbed brain.

In this state of mind he (like the bloated toad) brooded over the ills he meditated against a pair, whose mutual virtues and affection rendered them the admiration of Castile, till at length becoming pregnant with the most malignant plot that ever entered the human breast, he traversed the ground with unequal steps, his eyes flashed fire, and his whole frame became agitated. Thrice he weighed it over in his mind, and as often rejected it, the bare suggestion appaling at the moment his very soul!—However, there was no other alternative than this, either to adopt the plan suggested, or renounce the lady. — To do the latter was worse than death! —The deed though horrid was soon resolved on, and he left the forest more composed than he had entered it. —He now revisited the Castello d'Ovaldos as usual, the inhabitants of which tenderly inquired after the cause of the sudden alteration they beheld in his person, and the reason of his depriving them so long of his company. — To which he replied, with an affected smile, that business of importance to the state had at once ruffled his mind and withheld him from their society. This apology the infatuated pair accepted as genuine; and, rejoicing in the restoration of a friend, they gave full scope to the joy which inspired their bosoms on this happy occasion. Thus elated, they separated not till a late hour, and the wily Fernando once more became the constant companion of the unsuspecting Antonio, spending every leisure moment in the company of the latter and his amiable consort, who on their part used every endeavour to amuse, and dissipate the gloom which preyed upon their illustrious guest.

One morning, soon after the reunion of the friends, Fernando arriving at the Castello d'Ovaldos rushed into the presence of Antonio and Aurora, and, seizing both their hands in his, pressed them to his lips, at the same time seeming nearly ready to sink beneath the emotions which raged within his bosom. For several moments he remained, as it were, deprived of utterance, and at length breaking silence he informed the astonished pair, that business of a very unpleasant nature forced him to leave Castile for a few days; then taking Fernando aside, he informed him that, having quarrelled with the Prince Regent at a banquet given

by the Duc de Murcia, he was, according to the rigid law of honour, forced to meet him in single combat on the confines of the Spanish kingdom, and that, in consequence thereof, he would esteem it as a favour if he, on receiving a line from him, would hasten thither, in order to act as his second on that important occasion, which he promised to send as soon as the day should be fixed. This request Antonio readily promised to comply with; and, returning to Aurora and her lovely boy, Fernando soon after took leave, pressing the hands of the amiable pair to his lips, who on their part ardently called on heaven to protect him during his absence.

At length the promised epistle came to the hands of Antonio, who, making the necessary preparations for his departure, set out according to his promise to meet Fernando. After several days journey he arrived on the Spanish frontiers, where he found Fernando in the highest spirits imaginable, as the Duc de Murcia had compromised the matter, without bringing the affair to a serious issue. Antonio received this intelligence with pleasure, and congratulated his friend on the good fortune he had met with. Having partaken of a rich repast, and being exhausted with the journey he had taken, he retired at an early hour to rest, where, in despite of the extreme fatigue he laboured under, he passed the night in broken slumbers. Dreams of a most unpleasant nature obtruded themselves on his tortured fancy, and, on the ensuing morning, he arose unrefreshed, whilst a presentiment of some unforeseen misfortune hung heavy on his mind. The tortured by the admonition of a secret genius, he pressed Fernando to hasten his return to Castile, which request the latter complied with, and on the evening of the fourth day they arrived there; when the two friends parted, Fernando for the Palais de St. Marco, and Antonio for the Castello d'Ovaldos, where on his arrival he found the domestics and the youthful Carlos overwhelm'd with affliction.—With one voice they demanded of him if he had found their ill-fated lady!—Antonio started with horror on hearing this unwelcome question:—a cold sweat bedewed his brow; and, nearly deprived of utterance by the violence of his emotion, he, trembling with anxiety, inquired into the cause of the confusion he found them in. Ramirez, an ancient domestic, now stepped forward and informed him, (his discourse frequently interrupted by violent bursts of grief,) that, on

the evening of the second day after his departure, as Aurora was walking with Carlos on the ramparts of the castle, a band of desperadoes forced the outer gate, and, seizing the affrighted lady, bore her off in triumph, having first bound and gagged Carlos, in order to prevent his alarming the inhabitants of the castle. "It was my lot," continued the venerable Ramirez, "to discover my young lord in that perilous situation. For some moments I remained petrified as it were with astonishment; at length recovering from my surprize, I released him, and, trembling with anxiety for my lady's safety, demanded of him the cause of the ignominious situation I found him reduced to. My dear young master burst into tears, and, in a voice rendered scarcely audible by sobs, told me the fatal tale I have just related; adding that, while the desperadoes bore off his wretched mother, one of them drawing a poinard from his belt would have plunged it in his breast, had not one of his companions, more humane than himself, rushed between him and the intended victim of his sanguinary design; when wresting the deadly weapon from him he compelled him to rejoin the party that had forced my lady from her family and home, who now began to be lost in the murky shades of night."

Here Ramirez ended his narration; and Antonio, distracted with the intelligence, traversed the hall with unequal steps, tearing his hair and beating his manly brow with all the wild ferocity of madness. At length becoming more calm, he demanded if search had been made after the base despoilers of his peace. To this question he received an answer in the affirmative from Ramirez, who added, that all their endeavours to trace the progress of the ruffians had proved abortive.

The whole frame of Antonio now became agitated; the ruddy glow of health, which had hitherto adorned his manly cheek, gave place to the livid hue of death; the objects which surrounded him seemed to dance before his eyes; and, uttering a cry at once expressive of despair and anguish, he sunk into the arms of the faithful Ramirez, insensible to all around him. — On seeing this, Carlos, frantic with horror, gave a loud and piercing scream, exclaiming at the same time that his beloved father was no more! — In vain the domestics strove to console him; he remained fixed in his opinion; and, during the time of his father's remaining in that state of torpidity, he gave vent to the most violent expres-

sions of grief.—At length, Antonio recovered, but remained so weak, that Ramirez found it necessary to have him conveyed to his chamber, where, after passing a night of restless anxiety, he was on the ensuing morning seized with a malignant fever, the natural consequence of the violent emotions the loss of his beloved Aurora had excited in his care-fraught bosom, whose name, together with that of his friend Fernando, he would frequently repeat in the moments of delirious fantasy. The frequent repetition of the latter name caused Ramirez to recollect the friendship that existed between the prince and his master; and, hence concluding that the presence of a person so dear to him would be some alleviation to his grief, he dispatched one of his fellow vassals to the Palais de St. Marco to inform Fernando of his lord's misfortune, and request the favour of his attendance at the Castello d'Ovaldos. The domestic no sooner received this order than he hastened to the residence of Fernando, where, after waiting a considerable time, he received (to his no small astonishment) the following cool and laconic answer,—that affairs of state rendered it impossible for him to pay attention to the calls of private friendship.—De Lantos, for that was the name of the domestic, bore this uncouth message to Ramirez, who received it from his mouth with no less astonishment than De Lantos had done from that of the prince's attendant.—Ramirez remained for several moments lost in thought: at length he exclaimed, "It must be so!—My lady's loss is now accounted for:—the clue is not unwound, but perseverance may in time dissolve the mystery." He then charged De Lantos to take no notice of the prince's message; which done, he hastened to pay his evening visit to the ill-fated Antonio.

While affairs bore this unpropitious appearance at the Castello d'Ovaldos, Aurora, her eyes streaming with tears, and her bosom torn with contending passions, was doomed to pass her days in a spacious dungeon, whose gloomy appearance gave sufficient demonstration that many deeds of deadly note had been transacted there. Bones of human kind were used in this disgustful cell to stop those breaches, which the all-devouring hand of time had made in its antient walls; whilst the stone pavement, speckled over with blood, looked like marble of a new temperament. Hither this ill-fated lady was conveyed by the ferocious ruffians who had borne her from her much-loved child and husband, travelling

by night, and putting up by day at the most solitary places they could select on the road, until they arrived at the place of destination, when, alighting from their horses, they bore the ill-fated Aurora (still blindfolded and gagged) through a long subterraneous passage, as she guessed, from the sound of their footsteps; till at length, after undoing many bolts and letting fall a massy chain, whose clang re-echoing through the vaults struck fresh horror to the soul of the ill-fated Aurora, they halted, and, pulling the bandage from her eyes, discovered to her distracted view the horrid place doomed to be her future residence; which fate was made known to her in a solemn voice by one of the ruffians. This fresh accumulation of horror was too much for human nature to support, and uttering a scream of terror she sunk lifeless on the ground.

In this state of insensibility she remained for a considerable time, and on her recovery found herself alone in the cell of death. Reduced to this deplorable and wretched situation, she gave vent to the most violent exclamations of grief and despair. Overwhelmed with affliction, her days were spent in fruitless lamentation, and her nights in restless anxiety. In her calmer moments, she strove to account for this sudden separation from her beloved Antonio, and all those joys attendant on connubial love, by fixing the blame on some individual:—but, alike courteous and affable to all, and naturally virtuous, she could not (sensible as she was of never having done any one an injury) accuse any person of the vile act that had in one moment torn her from all the pleasures of friendship, love, and harmony, and the next plunged her into all the miseries of captivity and incertitude. — Several days elapsed in this solitary manner, without her once gaining the glimpse of a human being, her daily provision being conveyed to her by means of a turning-box. — However, on the seventh day, to her no small astonishment, she discovered, on taking her allowance, that it was not only of a better quality but that it was also accompanied by a letter. This she seized hastily, and breaking it open read as follows:

"*Most beloved of women!*

Hate not one, who, having torn you from all you held dear, now holds you in a state of sad captivity:—blame not me, but the stars, who, with malignant spite, doomed me not to know so much excellence till it had become the pro-

perty of another. Necessity (not choice) forced me to secure your person. It is done! you are in my power! and I give you till the ninth day to determine whether splendour or captivity shall be the future fate of the most lovely of her sex!"

Here the letter ended; and, for several moments, Aurora remained transfixed with astonishment. At length getting the better of the surprize this uncouth epistle had excited, she read it over several times, in order to discover if possible by the style or hand-writing the wily author of her misery; but, alas! all her endeavours proved of no avail; and she was forced to leave to the never-erring hand of time the developement of a mystery she could not unravel.

At length the ninth day arrived; and, tearing a leaf from her pocket-book, which luckily she had still about her, she wrote an answer with a pencil, expressive at once of the indignation the conduct of her keeper had excited in her breast, and a firm determination never to violate, in the smallest degree, those vows she had offered in the face of heaven to her wedded lord. This done, she folded it up carefully; and, when the time came for receiving her allowance, she placed the note in the box, at the same time as she took the provision from it.

A period of nine days now elapsed without anything transpiring respecting the result of the answer she had sent; at last, however, she received a second note by the same mode of conveyance as the former, in which the vile detainer of her person made the most solemn protestations of unalterable affection, at the same time warning her to avoid the fate of those, who, by an ill-timed obstinacy, had fallen victims to the impulse of momentary resentment.—Just as she read this passage, a hollow groan murmured through the vault, and a secret pannel, she had never discovered before, flying open with a harsh and grating sound, presented to her view the following inscription,—*Here lies Annette de Castagni, who, scorning the magnificent offers of the owner of this place, fell by his poignard,—a woeful instance of the effects of love when driven to desperation by neglect.*—Aurora, read this singular inscription with a mingled air of horror and disgust, and, resolving to brave the greatest dangers in defence of her virtue, she took up the letter which she had let fall and read as follows.—"Learn, lovely Aurora, from what

thou hast just read, to pity the slave of thy beauty, nor force him by cruelty to commit a crime, that must, in the hour of reflection, fill his soul with anguish and remorse. Adieu, dear lady; on the morrow, one of my slaves shall bring you into my presence, when your superior sense will, I hope, induce you to crown my wishes."

The singular diction of this ostentatious letter raised for a moment a smile on the woe-worn face of Aurora; but the recollection of the danger she was exposed to soon chased the risible stranger thence. Cast down with the gloomy prospect that surrounded her, she threw herself on her knees, and, seizing her rosary, prayed in the most suppliant manner to the divine Disposer of all things for protection in the hour of danger. This task performed, her mind became more collected; and, throwing herself on her bed of straw, she slept more sound than she had done since she left the Castello d'Ovaldos. However, she awoke with the dawn of day, and, taking some of the refreshments brought her the day before, awaited with silent resignation for the moment that was to convey her to the presence of her unknown lover, and perhaps by death put a period to her misfortunes.

At length the important moment arrived: she heard the door unbarred, whilst the clank of the massy chain that secured the entrance to her dungeon announced the approach of her guide, who shortly after entered the cell, attended by three others clad in sable robes, with vizors on their faces of the most uncouth form. These beckoned her to follow, at the same time enjoining silence. Aurora started with horror at the appaling figure of her guides; but, soon recovering from the momentary impulse, she told them with an air of offended virtue to lead, and she would follow. Then casting her veil over her face she quitted her solitary apartment, following her mystic guides in gloomy silence: with whom we will leave her, and return to the Castello d'Ovaldos, in order to inquire after the unfortunate Antonio, whom we left in a dangerous and critical situation.

Several revolving suns had beheld the wretched Lord of Ovaldos suffering the most excruciating pangs, inflicted by a disease rendered doubly formidable by its natural malignancy and the excess of grief whence it derived its origin: however, a naturally good constitution (after a tedious illness) gained the ascendancy, and Antonio was once more restored

restored to the afflicted Carlos and his faithful domestics, who, with heartfelt gratitude, returned thanks to that all-beneficent Being who had heard thus kindly their unanimous prayer for that beloved owner of the Castello d'Ovaldos; who, as soon as he recovered sufficient strength, having first given charge of his castle to the venerable Ramirez, set out for the Palais de St. Marco, accompanied by his son and the faithful Sebastiano, in order to inform his friend Fernando of the loss he had sustained, and consult with him on the best means of proceeding in the mournful business, so as to discover the vile perpetrators of a deed that had nearly plunged him into the oblivious gulph of futurity. Ramirez no sooner heard of his master's resolution, than he craved a moment's private conversation with his lord, which being granted, he informed him of the answer Fernando had sent to their solicitation of a visit to the restless couch of diseased friendship, but Antonio smiled at the good old man's suspicions, and, regardless of the imputed coolness of his friend, attributed the brevity of his reply to one of those peevish moments every profest statesman is liable to.

Thus infatuated, he proceeded on his journey, when, arriving about sun-set in the forest of Valacio, through which he must pass on his way to the Palais de St. Marco, which lay about a league distant from the other side of the forest, he had not proceeded more than half way, when he found himself attacked by several armed men, with their vizors down: the conflict remained long and arduous, but at length Antonio and his trusty Sebastiano, by an uncommon exertion of their prowess, succeeded in laying three of their opponents dead at their feet, and dispersed the rest. However, though fortune favoured them thus far, it had a bitter pill in store, of which, in the moment of victory, they had not the smallest suspicion. Too late they discovered that the unknown assailants had forced the youthful Carlos to become the unwilling companion of their flight; in vain they explored the labyrinthian recesses of the forest—in vain they, in the wildest agony of grief, called on his name; no reply, save that of echo, reached their distracted ears, and to his recent much-lamented loss, the ill-fated Antonio had now added to his burthen that of a beloved and only son. For several moments Antonio gave a free scope to the grief with

which this fresh accumulation of misfortune had overwhelmed him, tearing his hair, and making the air resound with his execrations on the heads of the base authors of his misery.

At length, driven to despair, and, maddening with desperation, he remounted his steed, and dashing through the forest, soon arrived at the Palais de St. Marco, where he was received by the illustrious Fernando with the warmest protestations of friendship, which was returned by Antonio with as much ardour as his present state of mind would admit of.

In the bosom of Fernando the ill-fated husband of Aurora now poured the fatal narrative of his misfortunes, which was received by that prince with the strongest expressions of horror and astonishment: frequently would he interrupt Antonio in his tale, by calling on heaven, in the most solemn manner, to shower its direst bolts of vengeance on the head of those who had thus maliguantly dashed the cup of happiness from the lips of his friend. And when he had concluded his mournful tale, he pressed him to his bosom, at the same time assuring him of every assistance in his power, and making the most solemn protestations of friendship, which, on the part of Antonio, were received with the greatest satisfaction; and although on his first arrival, he, at his own particular request, had an apartment allotted him in the Palais de St. Marco, wherein he shut himself up, permitting no one to see him, the prince and his faithful Sebastiano excepted, he at length was prevailed on to make one at a banquet, said to be given by Fernando to a party of select friends: here, according to the custom of the Castilians, each man had his flask of generous wine beside him, nothing being reckoned more mean or selfish than for more than one to drink out of the same bottle, which each guest was at liberty to replenish as often as they should think proper. On this occasion, unsuspecting any fresh accumulation of distress, the wonted melancholy of Antonio began, in some degree, to relax—not so the faithful Sebastiano, he had overheard a conversation, in which the lives of himself and master were threatened with a secret and speedy termination. It is true, he had not been able to obtain a sight of the parties, but from the circumstance of the voice not being unknown to him, and a secret presage which hung over his mind, he began to suspect the prince, and therefore watched

his every motion with a scrutinizing and distrustful eye.—The guests of Fernando, by clearing the festive board of the costly viands, beneath whose weight it had so lately groaned, had now done credit to the bounty of the donor, and the first toast being named by Fernando, each one having filled his glass, was on the point of pledging their illustrious chief, when Sebastiano, who stood in waiting behind his master, making a slip, as if by accident, knocked the glass clean out of the latter's hand; this, for a moment, caused as it were a general confusion, and Fernando, darting an indignant look at that trusty domestic, started from his seat, and would have smote him to the earth had not Antonio interfered, and apologized for the awkwardness of his servant. The prince then resumed his seat, and the goblets being again filled, just as the whole assembly were in the act of raising the sparkling beverage to their lips, that of Antonio's burst into pieces, whilst a hollow voice thrice exclaimed—*beware.*

The whole assembly now became petrified, as it were, with horror and astonishment, during which critical juncture, Sebastiano, regardless of all but his master's safety, contrived to exchange the prince's bottle and that of Antonio's, his lord's, in such a manner as the suspicious bottle should be placed as if it belonged to the prince alone.—This, however, was not done without Fernando's observing the same, who turned pale, and trembling with rage, would have poignarded Sebastiano on the spot if he durst; however, stifling his rage under the cloak of sudden indisposition, he broke up the assembly, who, taking a hasty leave, retired to their respective beds, to banish in sleep those fumes which the luscious grape had raised in their brains; as did also the prince, who, though surrounded with splendour, passed a night not to be envied by the meanest peasant.—Antonio and Sebastiano were among the first who retired to rest, being conducted to their respective chambers, by two of Fernando's attendants, where we leave them to enjoy their repose, if rest can be obtained under a roof like that of the Palais de St. Marco.

Aurora having given herself up to the guidance of the unknown's emissaries, passing in silence on her way to the place of destination, through several gloomy vaults and spacious

apartments, whose Gothic furniture spoke in the plainest terms of the antiquity of the mansion, at length arrived at a magnificent saloon, decorated with the most costly furniture, and every other appendage that art or nature could devise, suited to so splendid an apartment. On their arrival in this enchanted place, for such it seemed in comparison to the others they had passed through on their way thither, the guides of the ill-fated Aurora informed her, by action, that until the arrival of their lord, she might recline on a sumptuous sopha, which stood at the farther end of the room, and which was so situated, that she could not stir without her figure being reflected in some one of the many looking-glasses that adorned the chamber; thus rendering her every action public to the guards who waited without the several avenues that led into this saloon, and precluding all hopes of escaping from one, who, though unknown to her, she was well convinced, retained her under his roof for the worst of purposes.

Overwhelmed by grief and fatigue, the ill-fated Aurora bowed assent, and throwing herself on the sopha, the guards left the room, leaving her at leisure to reflect on the forlorn condition she was reduced to; however, her reverie was soon interrupted by a concert, which, for the delectableness of its execution, would have charmed even the frost-chilled bosom of an anchorite. A momentary thrill of pleasure ran through the soul of our ill-fated heroine; but, alas! like a gleam of sunshine on a wintry day, it soon disappeared—the wonted cloud of sorrow assumed its station, and softening into tears, the pearly drops pursued each other adown her pallid cheek in quick rotation: at length the silver trumpet announced the arrival of the owner of this magnificent apartment, and Aurora, directing her trembling eyes towards the grand entrance, beheld a tall majestic figure approach, dressed in the most costly habiliaments, but masked so closely, that she could not perceive any part of his face. The stranger now threw himself on his knees before Aurora, and in a low voice, entreated her pardon for the rude means he had taken to convey her to a place where every pleasure that wealth or power could command awaited her acceptance.—Here he paused, but Aurora, petrified with astonishment, remained silent, and the former resuming his discourse, made known the love her charms had inspired him with in the most

impassioned terms, at the same time requesting a speedy return to a passion, which, for fervency and truth, outrivalled all the heroes of antiquity. Unable to speak, Aurora darted a look of indignation on her prostrate suitor, who at this time, taking her hand, would have pressed it to his lips, but she spurned him from her, and in a determined tone of voice, demanded to be led back to her dungeon. The stranger now started from his prostrate situation, and for several moments traversed the apartment with disordered steps, then seizing the hand of Aurora, he exclaimed, "Madam, your request shall be complied with.—Slaves," continued he, stamping with his foot, at which instant her former guides entered the apartment, "bear this relentless beauty to her cell;" then throwing her towards them, exclaimed, "Ere to-morrow's sun your child and husband will be in my power; away, and reflect more at leisure on the unalterable terms I now propose—a prompt compliance to my wishes, or death to those you love most dear:" saying these words, he quitted the apartment, whilst Aurora, near dead, and trembling with terror, was led back to her dungeon, where, fastening the massy door after them, they retired, leaving the ill-fated Aurora to brood over the many ills which fortune, ever wayward, held in store to shower at pleasure on her devoted head. Here fancy, ever ready to magnify the sorrows of the wretched, held to view a loathsome picture of futurity, wherein our nearly-distracted heroine beheld her beloved lord and the youthful Carlos receive the fatal blow from the vindictive hand of the vile detainer of her person.

Thus agitated, her whole frame became disordered with the excess of grief that overwhelmed her, and three successive days beheld the ill-fated Aurora in this mournful situation, whilst, in addition to her own misfortunes, her bosom heaved with tender anxiety, lest the revered lord of her affections should, at that moment, have fallen into the power of the ferocious chief, who had thus clandestinely torn her from the summit of domestic happiness.—The idea drove her nearly to madness, and tearing her lovely hair by handfuls from her head, she uttered the most piercing shrieks of anguish and despair.

On the third night after the mysterious interview, just as the midnight hour was announced by the humming of the

shard-born beetle, the sound of approaching steps roused Aurora from a mournful reverie, and starting from her humble couch, she beheld the stranger enter by a secret pannel, which she had never before observed. He drew near her in a respectful, but disordered manner, and throwing himself at her feet, again renewed his former declaration of love, which was rejected by Aurora with her wonted firmness, who, in a determined manner, told him, that those vows she had made at the holy shrine should go unblemished with her to the grave. Enraged at her unshaken fortitude, the stranger stamped violently with his foot, when Malheuro entered—he gave him a brazen key, and pointing to another part of the cell, the latter flew to the spot, and opening a private door, discovered to the view of the distracted Aurora, her much loved son, loaded with irons, and reclined on a heap of dirty straw. These victims of a tyrant's malice no sooner saw each other, than uttering a cry of astonishment, they rushed forward, in order to snatch a fond embrace, when the iron grating preventing them, they sunk into a state of inanimation. The stranger viewed this scene with torpid insensibility, waiting, with silent apathy, the recovery of his ill-fated captives, which had no sooner taken place, than, seizing the hand of Aurora, he, in a stern manner, demanded her answer, adding, that on that depended the life of her child and husband. She started with horror at hearing this declaration, and in the agony of grief, exclaimed—"Oh! strange vicissitude of fortune, how has my domestic happiness vanished—Ah! Fernando, didst thou know the fate of thy friends, the house of De Mornosa would not, at this moment, spend their days in sad captivity."—"Ha! ha! ha!" interrupted the stranger, laughing exultingly, "that staff thou reliest on is dependant on my will."—"Heavens!" exclaimed Aurora, "is he also captive?"—"No, proud fair one, that favoured friend behold in me." Saying these words, he threw off his disguise, and discovered to the astonished Aurora, in the person of the stranger, the perfidious Fernando of Castile, who, at the moment he professed the warmest friendship for Antonio, and the whole house of Mornosa, had secretly plotted against their happiness. For several moments Aurora remained petrified with horror, and on coming to herself, upbraided him in the severest terms for his perfidy, at the same time daring his utmost malice.

Fernando traversed the cell with disordered steps, his eyes flashing fire, and his every action demonstrating the rage which burnt within his breast. Thus exasperated, he caused the door to be closed on the youthful Carlos: then leaving Malheuro to observe her actions, he left the dungeon, telling her in a stern and revengeful manner that, within an hour, he should expect her answer.—Aurora now gave vent to the grief which oppressed her care-fraught bosom, and for some moments remained insensible to all around her. At length recovering a little, she ventured to solicit her guard for a moment's interview with her son.—For some time he remained inflexible; but at last, overcome by her earnest entreaties, Malheuro threw the door open, and Aurora at length had the felicity of conversing with her beloved Carlos. During this interesting scene, Malheuro, having seated himself near the stone table, fell asleep with his head thereon, and the keys placed on it in such a manner as to lie between his arms which supported his drooping head. Carlos was the first who perceived the situation of their jailer; when, pointing out the keys to his mother, he exclaimed, "Now, dear mother, seize the keys! One bold effort may afford us liberty! If we desist, infamy and death await us; but, if we fail, the latter only."—Aurora started: the heroic language of her son inspired her with fresh ardour, and, drawing softly up to the sleeping guard, she first drew a pair of pistols from his belt; which done, she held one to his head, whilst Carlos, passing his arm through the grating, gently moved the keys from between the arms of the sleeping ruffian.

Liberty thus effected, the enraptured Aurora and her child clung to each other in a fond embrace. At length their emotions having in some degree subsided, they took the pistols, and, holding them towards the sleeping ruffian, were on the point of retiring by the secret pannel, when it flew open, and a man closely muffled in a cloak put a paper in her hand to this effect, 'Injured lady, follow one, who, pitying your misfortunes, wishes to convince you of the infidelity of a husband, who (instead of avenging your wrongs) now revels gaily in another's arms.'—Aurora read the miss-spelt scrawl with silent horror.—For some moments she paused, undetermined how to proceed. The unknown guide beckoned her to follow him in silence. She obeyed; and,

after passing through many intricate passages, they arrived at a Gothic bed-chamber, where, at the instigation of their guide, Aurora and her son concealed themselves behind the arras; in which situation they had not remained long before (to their no small surprize) they beheld Antonio enter!—He immediately prepared to retire to his bed for the evening; which he had scarcely done, before Fernando rushed into the apartment, and, uttering an exclamation of revenge, plunged his rapier into the body of Antonio, whilst at the same instant the shriek of a female issued from the bed. It was Lorenza, the wife of Fernando, whom he now accused of incontinence; and, calling on two of his domestics, he caused them to convey Lorenza, who was nearly speechless with astonishment and horror, to the dungeon of the Brazen Tower. At this instant, Aurora, unable to support the trying scene any longer, gave a loud and piercing scream of horror, and sunk into a state of insensibility; in which she remained for some time; and, on her recovery, to her no small surprize, found herself seated on a rich sofa in the mysterious saloon, the wily Fernando sitting on one side watching her recovery; as was Carlos on the other, waiting the auspicious moment with the tenderest anxiety.

Immediately on her recovery, Fernando again renewed his vows of love with redoubled ardour. Aurora, regardless of all but the horrid scene she had just witnessed, however paid no attention to his suit, at which the former, maddening with fury and despair, seized the person of Carlos, and, holding his still reeking sword over his head, threatened to put an instant period to his existence. The danger of her son roused Aurora from the melancholy reverie she was plunged in, and uttering a scream of horror, she rushed in between Fernando and her son; when, indifferent to her future fate, and eager to preserve the life of her beloved Carlos, she consented to an immediate union with Fernando. The latter pressed her to his bosom with rapturous extasy, and, calling on a priest whom he had previously sent for, the matrimonial ceremony was immediately begun; when, just as Fernando, having put on the ring, was in the action of embracing his bride, the saloon became illumined with a blueish vapour, and the spectre of the murdered Antonio was seen leading in the captive Lorenza, who, immediately rushing forward, plunged a poignard in the breast of Fer-

nando, who, uttering a loud and horrid execration, fell to rise no more! So certain is the sanguinary crime of murder to meet its just reward!

Aurora fainted on beholding this scene of horror, and was conveyed to another chamber, whilst the spectre of Antonio, raising its eyes to heaven in grateful silence, vanished into the air. The Palais de St. Marco now became a house of mourning. At length their grief subsiding, Lorenza accounted for the late transactions in the following manner:—"An air of mystery has hung over the affairs of this place; but, suspecting my husband's perfidy, I watched his every action. It was I that repeated in mystic tone the word *beware* at the banquet; I also knew Antonio was conducted to *my* chamber as the one appointed for his repose, in order to effect his ruin and my own. That scene you are too well acquainted with; and I have only to add, that, while giving vent to the grief which hung heavy on my soul in the dungeon of the Brazen Tower, the spectre of your murdered husband stood before me!—It beckoned me to follow!—I obeyed!—the result of which obedience proved the destruction of Fernando of Castile, at the same moment as he became the Husband of Two Wives!"

Here Lorenza finishing her narration, the two widows vowed eternal friendship; and, in fact, they spent the residue of their days together; when Carlos and Ulrisa, the son and daughter of the above, forming in their riper years an affection for each other, they were united; when, by their beneficence and affability of behaviour, they became the admiration of all Castile, who praised them as much as they execrated the memory of the perfidious Fernando.

FRIBURGH-CASTLE,

OR THE

WIFE OF TWO HUSBANDS.

IN the midst of a wild romantic country on the German frontiers stood, on the summit of a rugged precipice, a Gothic mansion, known by the name of Friburgh-Castle: in remoter ages than the one we are about to record it had been one of the principal fortresses in the German empire, and therefore occupied a vast tract of ground. It had also been used as a state-prison, where, according to tradition, many brave men, as well of the blood-royal as others, had fallen victims to the base machinations of court-intrigue and party caprice: for this reason, the whole of that part which had been appropriated to that use was, according to the account of a numerous peasantry which dwelt in its neighbourhood, absolutely haunted. Each one could in a manner relate the transactions of these aërial beings, and ludicrous adventures, which they or some of their family had met with after the mystic hour, from the miriad of spectres, which they asserted not only took up their residence in the eastern apartments but also amused themselves in the labarynthian mazes of the adjacent forest of Hendroogh. On the strength of these rumours, no one at length dared to venture at the midnight hour within a certain distance of the castle or the mysterious forest. In this situation stood affairs, when one evening, soon after the commencement of

the thirteenth century, just as the castle-clock announced with solemn knell the midnight hour, a most tremendous storm arose: the rain poured in torrents from the clouds, and inundated all the country round the castle; the lightning, flashing incessantly, kept up a continued blaze; the thunder rolled terrific over the heads of the inhabitants of Friburgh, shaking the stupendous pile to the very centre, while fiery meteors ever and anon struck its lofty battlements, and threatened every moment its final destruction. Shrieks (as of murdered persons) served at the intervals of this dire combustion of the elements to fill up this scene of horror; which, together with the discordant screams of the bird of night, served to appal even the hearts of those vassals, who, through having followed their chief to the sanguinary field, had been accustomed to meet the greatest dangers undaunted.

Unable to sleep, the domestics assembled together in the servants hall, where with palid cheek they patiently awaited what to them seemed the moment of final retribution. At this moment, the shrieks of women assailed their ears, and immediately after, Jocasta, with dishevelled hair, rushed among them; her whole frame seemed agitated; her bosom heaved with emotions; whilst sobs, that threatened to burst the heart of the lovely maid, totally precluded all possibility of utterance. The domestics gathered round her in silent astonishment; at length, Gortz, who had been a favourite domestic of the father as well as his present lord, (the Baron de Hortloz,) ventured to inquire into the cause thereof: but all his endeavours proved abortive, and nothing but broken sentences answered his inquiries:—my father—the eastern chamber—assassins—death!—Alarmed at this unintelligible jargon, Gortz, accompanied by two or three of the oldest domestics, quitted the hall in order to learn the origin of this new alarm; first taking care to give orders that the afflicted Jocasta should be instantly conveyed to her own apartment, which command was instantly executed.

The venerable Gortz now hastened to the chamber, where his much-loved lord had been wont to sleep, the door of which he found open; impatient to learn the origin of his young lady's emotion, he rushed into the apartment, where he beheld a scene of horror that, for a moment, rivetted him to the spot he stood on with astonishment: his beloved lord,

the son of his revered master and first patron of his youthful services, lay weltering in his gore; his body covered over with gashes, whose gaping mouths seemed to call aloud for justice on the base assassin, who, in the unguarded hour of sleep, had rushed upon his privacy, and robbed the casket of a jewel rendered more precious by its innate virtues than its intrinsic value. At length, his spirits resuming their wonted office, the faithful Gortz gave a cry of horror, and flung himself on the lifeless body of his master, whence he was torn with difficulty by his fellow-vassals, and borne to his own chamber; where, having shed a flood of tears to the memory of his departed lord, he found himself sufficiently recovered to attend a summons from Jocasta, which he at that moment received, to attend her in her apartment, in order to consult together on the best means of discovering the perpetrators, who thus basely had in a moment changed the once-festive Castle of Friburgh, where benevolence and hospitality had been the order of the day, into a house of mourning.

On entering the apartment of his young lady, Gortz beheld the lovely maiden reclined on a sofa, her eyes cast in solemn sadness on the ground and suffused in tears. Thrice did he demand her pleasure before she was sensible of his approach; and, even then, she started with involuntary horror. "Madam," repeated Gortz for the fourth time, "say, what would you of your vassal? Speak, young lady, dear to me for the sake of my revered lord, the late baron, and his honoured sire, in whose service these hairs have attained the silver emblazonment of age. Proceed; and, if your old servant (who has so oft borne you while an infant in his aged arms) can assist in alleviating the affliction you at present labour under, it will be remembered by him as the happiest period of his existence." — "Good old man," replied Jocasta, "thy fidelity to our house shall not be unrewarded. Since fate has thus clandestinely stole away the illustrious owner of these vast domains, thou shalt find in me at once a friend and protector; to thy care I will commit the execution of those rites due to a person of the late baron's rank; a task, which, in my perturbed state of mind, would not be fitting for me to perform. Haste then, and make the necessary preparations for the funeral of my" ——— father she would have added, but, that a burst of

wild emotion choaked her utterance. At length, the pearly messengers of grief forced their way, and run in rapid succession down her palid cheek, which gave relief to her care-fraught bosom. The venerable Gortz, on seeing her become more composed, ventured with respectful diffidence, to inquire what steps she would advise him to take, with regard to promoting a strict inquiry and search after the base assassins of her honoured father, the late baron. The whole frame of Jocasta became agitated at this question; her lips quivered, and her countenance betrayed a degree of confusion, which, to an unbiassed person, would have borne all the appearance of detected guilt: nay, for the moment, the venerable Gortz felt himself impressed with the idea, but, naturally good himself, he repulsed the horrid suggestion as ill-natured and unfounded.

At length, becoming more calm, Jocasta seized the hand of Gortz, and, fixing her eyes attentively upon his, demanded if he had any idea from what quarter the foul deed they now lamented could have originated; adding, that nothing but envy of the superior virtue of the late baron could have induced the assassin to strike the fatal blow, which had felled the trunk and sinews of the house of Hortlozz. Gortz started at the curious question, and, with fervent zeal, exclaimed, "No, by St. Ignatius! Would to heaven I had; for then, my dear young lady, these eyes should never close, nor my tired limbs know rest, till I had forced the recreant from his den, and with these aged hands dragged him to instant justice?"—Jocasta changed colour at the warm ejaculation of the old domestic; but, stifling her emotion, she pressed the hands of the good old man in her's, and, after applauding his fidelity in the warmest terms, she informed him that she had her suspicions of a person, whose name, on account of the consanguinity which existed between him and the late baron, she wished for the present to conceal, until by perseverance she should either clear him of the foul suspicion, or ground her thoughts on proofs incontrovertible. "Do you then," continued Jocasta, "keep what I have dropped as secret as possible. Security may throw them off their guard; haste then, and perform the sacred function I have already entrusted to thy charge; nor fear ere the remains of my revered father shall be entombed with his illustrious ancestors, I shall myself discover the base despoiler of

his latter day. Leave me, I have sworn to effect the discovery, nought but death shall hinder the completion of my wishes."

Struck with the singularity of her manner, the venerable Gortz began to suspect that her brain, unable to bear the horrid scene she had so lately witnessed, had sustained an injury from the violent paroxysm of grief she had been thrown into on this occasion, and therefore, with the tenderest anxiety, endeavoured to dissuade her from her purpose, offering to send the domestics in various directions to endeavour to trace out if possible the ruthless miscreant. However, he found her inflexible; and, above all, extremely averse to the proposal he had made her with respect to the domestics; observing, with a significant look, that she alone was selected to bring the murderer to justice. This assertion she gave with an air of such confidential assurance of success, that, but for the rationality of her other answers, would have convinced the faithful Gortz that she was absolutely insane. Being fully persuaded that this was not the case, he left the chamber, overwhelmed with anxiety and astonishment: anxiety, lest his beloved mistress should inadvertantly expose herself to danger; and astonishment, at the firm persuasion she expressed of being the person destined to effect the discovery of the base assassin. The whole appeared strange to him, mysterious in the extreme; a secret something whispered, all was not right; but still the old domestic, just himself, was slow to suspect others, and therefore repelled the vile suggestion; he had promised secrecy, and resolved to keep it, unless by some unforeseen event it should prove criminal to do so.

Thus resolved, he joined his fellow-vassals, who, with their wonted garulity and impertinent curiosity, pestered him with a thousand questions concerning the result of his interview with their young lady; such as — Well, how fares our young lady? — What says she of the baron's murder? — Have you learnt who did the horrid deed? — Has not our lord's ghost appeared yet to point out the assassin? — Gortz listened to them patiently, returning them a monosyllable reply to their respective inquiries. This, however, served rather to increase than extinguish their curiosity, and they were preparing a second volley of questions, no less impertinent than the preceding ones, when the bugle sounding at the outer gate laid an embargo on the subject, and, their

curiosity taking another course, they rushed forward to inquire into the cause of the summons without. The bugle, however, sounded a second time ere Gortz could reach the castle-gates. He now demanded who required admittance at that early hour.—"A friend," answered a voice without. —"Good heavens!" exclaimed Gortz, raising his eyes to heaven with a look of affectionate delight; "it is my young master!" The domestics no sooner heard this than they gave a shout of joy that made the castle-yard re-echo; the gates flew open, and Sneider de Hortlozz entered on horseback, attended by two domestics. Having alighted from his horse, he shook hands with Gortz, nodded familiarly round to the rest, and then hastened into the castle, where his first business was to inquire for his father. Gortz changed colour, and a profound silence succeeded to the late burst of congratulation.

Sneider felt a chilly fear assail his breast, and, nearly frantic with apprehension, he again demanded Gortz to conduct him to his father. "My lord," replied Gortz, (a deep sigh choaked his utterance,)—"for such we must now call you," exclaimed all the domestics together: "the baron"—"Is no more!" exclaimed Jocasta, rushing into the hall, "some unknown ruffian hath stolen on his privacy, and spoiled the root whence we sprouted."—Here she gave a loud scream, and, uttering several incoherent expressions, fell senseless at the feet of her brother; who, petrified with astonishment, stood as it were transfixed, staring on all around him, with a look of wild, yet anxious, inquiry: recovering at length in some degree from the emotion this strange reception had thrown him into, he ordered the still-inanimate Jocasta to be conveyed to her own apartment, whilst he retired with Gortz into the study of the late baron; where the latter broke to him by degrees the horrid catastrophe of his father. Sneider received the mournful news with astonishing composure; his bosom scarcely heaved a sigh, and he gave the necessary directions for his father's funeral with a degree of sang-froid that made the venerable and inexperienced Gortz shudder at his insensibility. Disgusted with the manners of his young lord, he seized the first opportunity of leaving the apartment, muttering as he retired an ejaculation of surprize at the alteration which a few months residence at Vienna had made in

the conduct and behaviour of his young master. Previously to his departure from the castle for the imperial city, the enraptured tenantry had beheld in him the direct counterpart of their deceased lord. Like him, he was tall, athletic, and elegant: his whole person was beauteous in the extreme; and in point of mental accomplishment he at that time promised to have few competitors on that score. The astonishment therefore of Gortz was naturally excited, when he beheld him bloated, with all the characteristics of depravity and excess, his whole frame emaciated, his heart callous to those tender feelings which had heretofore rendered him the admiration of his vassals, and his whole soul absorbed in the extatic idea of being now in full possession of the vast domains of his late father the baron, without being under the least control. Wrapt in this pleasing reverie, he passed the remainder of the day in the study of the late baron, looking over some ancient writings belonging to the family, ordering such refreshment as he stood in need of to be brought to him there. However, just as the castle-clock had announced the ninth hour of the night, he received a message from Jocasta, requiring his company in her apartment for a few hours. This request he instantly complied with; and, laying up the papers carefully he had been perusing, he hastened to the appointed assignation with his sister.

In the mean time, Gortz, who secretly resolved to trace if possible the assassin of his revered master, found means to inquire of those who had stood sentinel if they had observed any one pass them on the preceding night, after the inhabitants of the castle had retired to rest. However, his endeavours proved abortive; all (excepting one) answering in the negative; he informed the venerable domestic, that, upon the fatal evening, on the midway between the hours of twelve and one, while resting on his spear near the eastern gate, a solemn groan thrice assailed his ear, and a blue vapour rising out of the earth nearly at his feet moved forward in an eastern direction, which ascended slowly till it had come on a level with the window of his late lord, when it burst with a violent explosion. — Another groan succeeded! The massy doors of the Gothic mansion creaked upon their rusty hinges; and, soon after, a female figure dressed in white, holding a poignard in her hand besmeared with blood, passed from the portal of the eastern tower. — "It moved slowly onward," continued the sentinel, "and, gaining the

southern side of the castle, became lost among the many shadows that the silver moon reflected of the lofty turrets which adorn this ancient fabric. At this instant I was relieved, and saw no more!"—Here the sentinel ended his narration, and Gortz wishing him a good night retired to his own apartment, where he passed the revolving hours in reflecting on the singular occurrences which had taken place within the last two days at Friburgh-castle; till at length he became lost in the labyrinthian wilds of mystery. From this reverie he was roused by the cries of his young lady, whose chamber was situated in the same gallery as his own. He listened attentively, and the shriek was repeated, whilst the noise as of some one falling made the vaulted roof re-echo. A hollow groan succeeded!—Appalled with horror, the venerable domestic flew to Jocasta's apartment, where — terrible to view! — he beheld Sneider lying breathless and covered with blood at the feet of Jocasta, who had sunk back on her sopha in a state of insensibility.—The good old man remained for several moments petrified with astonishment, casting his eyes around in wild confusion, as if to discover the cause of this new scene of horror.

At length, Jocasta recovering from her swoon opened her languid eyes, and, looking wildly round, as if in quest of some disgusting object, which had reduced her to the deplorable condition which Gortz had found her in, at last discovered that venerable domestic, seized his hand with the firm grasp of frenzied horror, then, looking at the lifeless body of Sneider, with a mingled air of grief and terror, she exclaimed, "Oh! Gortz, I have discovered"—she would have proceeded, but her emotion choaked her utterance; and, heaving a deep sigh, she again relapsed into her former state of torpidity, in which she remained for sometime, whilst Gortz hung over her senseless form, overwhelmed with terror and amazement. At length, she once more regained her scattered senses, when, drawing that worthy domestic nearer to her, she continued as follows: "Yes, good old man, in Sneider you behold the worst of wretches, the murderer of his father! — and, but for the interposition of this arm, the despoiler of his sister's virtue!—Your looks betray the astonishment my assertion has excited; but the assertion is, alas! too real. That wretch! (brother I cannot call him), came to my apartment in pursuance of a

message I had sent, requesting the favour of his company.— He came, and we passed the evening in mutual grief over the loss we have so lately sustained. At length supper being served up at his request in my chamber, he passed the wine about with a degree of vivacity that astonished me, frequently pressing me to follow his example. He soon became elevated; and, seizing my hand, he (to my no small horror and astonishment) declared that he had long regarded me with a partial eye, and that, as an oblation to my charms, he had destroyed—his father! —'And now,' said Sneider, I must reap the harvest of my crimes.'——Saying these words," continued Jocasta, "he attempted to force me to his wishes, when, breaking from his incestuous grasp, I exclaimed, Wretch! Fly from my presence! lest I forget you are my brother, and call in aid to seize a paricide! — His eyes now flashed vindictive, and, drawing a poignard from his girdle, he would have plunged it in my breast, but wrest it from him, not knowing what I did, I sheathed it in his bosom, and he fell lifeless at my feet! — Struck with horror at what I had done, I uttered a piercing shriek, and sunk senseless on my couch, in which situation you found me."

The narration ended, Gortz raised his eyes to heaven in silent astonishment. — Jocasta now commanded him to convey the lifeless body of Sneider from her presence; which order he effected with the assistance of two other domestics, whom he had called to help him.

After the necessary preparations had been made, the remains of the late baron and his son were interred with all the pomp suited to their rank in the family-chapel, whilst the surrounding spectators expressed their wonder at the singular events which had taken place at Friburgh-castle. This sad ceremony performed, the procession returned to the castle, where, having each drank a cup of spiced cordial to the memory of the deceased, they separated, and returned to there respective homes.

In a few days after, Jocasta was solemnly proclaimed princess and sovereign lady of the principality of Hortlozz. On this occasion, she threw aside her sable weeds, and appeared in the most costly robes. A mixture of grief and hauteur that sat on her faded brow made her still more interesting than her beauty, when not overcast by the mist of sorrow, had done. The ceremony of installing being over, the festivity of the day commenced with a splendid tourna-

ment, in which a myriad of knights from the several parts of Europe, no less renowned for wisdom than prowess of arms, performed feats of skill that astonished the beholders. At length two knights of a more than common size entered the field. They were dressed in a sumptuous manner, bearing each a costly banner descriptive of the faith they professed. The terms of combat being proclaimed thrice by the herald, the silver trumpet sounded the charge, and, spurring their stately steeds, they rushed boldly forward with their lances fixed in the rests. They met each other with a deadly crash, when, both being thrown from their horses, they remained several moments extended on the ground in a state of insensibility. At length, recovering from the shock, they arose from their recumbent posture, and, drawing their trusty falchions, they renewed the combat with redoubled fury. The dexterity with which they warded off each other's blows excited the admiration of all present; the astonished spectators waiting with anxiety the result of a conflict which had proved of a longer duration than any they had witnessed for many years. At length one of them fell, the falchion of the other having pierced his breast. Immediately the herald caused the vanquished knight to be removed to the castle, as he began to shew signs of an approaching dissolution, which unfortunate event put a termination to the sports of the day much sooner than they would otherwise have been, according to the rules of courtesy. As soon as his wound had been dressed, Jocasta repaired to the chamber of the vanquished knight, in order to inquire after his health, when on entering the apartment, she found him extended on a sopha, pale and languid from the blood he had lost. The princess no sooner cast her eyes on him than she gave a loud shriek and sunk in a swoon at his feet, first exclaiming, with an air of frantic admiration, "My husband!"

Sir Fermaldos, (for it was indeed him,) had, about five years back, rescued the late baron and his lovely daughter from a most perilous situation that ever two mortals were exposed to. The baron was extremely fond of hunting, and on these occasions frequently took Jocasta with him, who was no less fond of that salubrious pastime than himself. One day having started a boar of a larger size than common, they were so deeply engaged in the pursuit thereof, that they not only separated from their company, but were also actually bewildered in the labyrinthian mazes of a spa-

cious forest before they perceived it; nor would they have done so so soon as they did, had not a thorn, sticking in one of the horses feet, forced them to halt. Nothing could equal their astonishment when they discovered the situation to which their eagernesss in pursuing the ferocious boar had reduced them to. They immediately alighted; when, having with much difficulty extracted the thorn from the foot of the suffering animal, finding themselves exhausted with fatigue, they fastened their horses to a tree; they then threw themselves on the green sward, in order to recruit their exhausted strength, and in this situation fell asleep; when just as another boar, still larger than the one they had been in pursuit of, was on the point of rushing on them from an adjacent thicket, Sir Fermaldos, who had lost himself in the mazes of the forest, arrived at the spot, and, perceiving the perilous situation of the noble sleepers, immediately attacked the ferocious animal; and, after a long and arduous conflict, laid it breathless at his feet.

At this moment the baron and Jocasta awaked, who started with horror on seeing the rugged beast lay so near them. Sir Fermaldos addressed them in a most courteous manner, informing them of the critical situation he had found them in, and thanking heaven in the most fervent manner for having nerved his arm sufficiently to snatch them from destruction. The baron thanked him for the service he had rendered him and his beloved daughter, and inquired of him his birth and title, in order to make honourable mention of the obligation he had laid him under. "My name," replied the stranger-knight, "is Sir Fermaldos de Romaldi, second cousin to the renowned Pedro, Prince of Arragon. From my youth I have been bred to the use of arms: to speak of my deeds would appear ostentatious on my part, and therefore I leave to others the recital of adventures, which modesty and propriety forbid me to relate. Thus I shall only add, that the small share of martial prowess, which heaven has allotted to me, has been devoted to the service of injured virtue and oppressed merit.

Having been at a stately feast, given in honor of the nuptials of my cousin Pedro of Arragon, and the lovely Blanche, of the house of Austria, during which, I for fourteen days successively, partook of the princely sports and pastimes which took place on that joyous occasion; at length that period having expired, I, with much difficulty,

prevailed on my illustrious cousin to permit me to return to my own castle, whither I was going, when having lost my way in the forest, I arrived so opportunely to your assistance; however, as my castle is at no great distance, could we once extricate ourselves from this labyrinth, I could afford you an asylum where you might refresh your exhausted spirits, in a manner suited to your rank.

Night having set in, this illustrious trio passed the murky hours of darkness in relating tales of past times; at length the morn with roseate tint illumined the eastern hemisphere, when our travellers mounting their steeds set out in quest of some outlet, whereby they might regain their liberty; this desirable object however was not easily attained, nor did they discover the wished-for opening until the sun, having reached the mid-heaven, announced the hour of noon to be past; the hearts of our delighted wanderers beat with extatic rapture on effecting this discovery.

Having once more obtained their liberty, they accompanied Sir Fermaldos to his castle, where they met with a reception at once expressive of the dignity and benevolence of its noble owner; with him they passed several days, having first sent a messenger to Friburgh castle, to inform their vassals of their safety.

At length, having recovered from their late fatigue, they returned to Friburgh castle, whither they were accompanied by Sir Fermaldos, who from that moment became a constant visitor at the castle; the charms of Jocasta had, at the first moment of his beholding her, made a deep and lasting impression on the heart of Sir Fermaldos, who seized the first opportunity of disclosing the passion he felt for his lovely daughter to the baron, who, pleased with the offer of an alliance from a family rendered doubly honourable by a long line of illustrious ancestors, and its vast possessions, instantly gave his consent, and without once consulting the inclinations of Jocasta, the day was fixed for their marriage; it arrived, and Jocasta became the Marchioness de Romaldi.

This event was celebrated with the greatest pomp at Friburgh castle, and the numerous vassals of the baron partook of the festivity which reigned on that joyous occasion: the rejoicings, which lasted for several weeks, had not been long finished, when Sir Fermaldos received orders from the prince of Arragon to join the Christian army, who was then about

embarking for the holy land, to redeem it from the ferocious Saracens. He received this unwelcome intelligence with manly fortitude, and taking a tender farewell of his beloved Jocasta, set out to join the Christian army, from which expedition he was returning, when, hearing of the princely sports which were to take place at Friburgh castle, he resolved on partaking of them without discovering himself. Judge then what must be the emotion of Sir Fermaldos, when he beheld his beloved Jocasta, from whom he had been so long absent, laying in a state of torpidity at his feet. The sight, together with the weakness his wounds had reduced him to, caused him nearly to follow her example.

At length she recovered, and, affecting the greatest pleasure at his return, pressed Sir Fermaldos to her bosom; the surgeon now entering the apartment to dress the wounds of Sir Fermaldos, Jocasta was forced to leave the apartment: — from this moment Sir Fermaldos, whose symptoms, on being borne from the lists, threatened a speedy dissolution, began to recover daily, and the strongest hopes were entertained of his recovery, when suddenly Jocasta, with a distracted air, announced his death, soon after which his remains were deposited in the family vault.

Immediately after his decease Grimaldo de Rufens, the knight who had wounded the late Fermaldos, became a constant visitor at the castle; he was tall, of a swarthy complexion; his limbs large and bony, cruel and ferocious in his disposition, and a perfect libertine. Nevertheless these qualifications, which would have disgusted any other woman, served seemingly to recommend him the more strongly to Jocasta, who consulted him on the most trivial occcasions. The pre-eminence she gave him over all the noble persons, who frequented the castle, created the strongest jealousy amongst them, whilst the sudden death of Sir Fermaldos, at a moment when his recovery was expected, raised ideas in the breasts of the frequenters of Friburgh castle, not of the most favourable nature with regard to Jocasta, and her favourite knight. However, well knowing his revengeful disposition, they wrapt their thoughts in mysterious silence, leaving time to the discovery of what they suspected.

At length the usual period of mourning being expired, Jocasta uniting her fortunes to those of Grimaldo de Rufens, he became the sovereign lord of Friburgh castle, when the first effort of his tyranical disposition, was the imprison-

ment of the venerable Gortz, merely for asserting that the benevolence of his old lord rendered his remembrance dear to the tenantry of Friburgh.

Possessed of riches in abundance, Grimaldo gave full scope to his libertine principles, slighting even the very woman who had thus exalted him, for others, by no means her equal, either in person or fortune. For some time she beheld this with indifference, but at length pride taking the alarm, she openly accused him of his perfidy; his face now became overspread with a ghastly white, whilst his grey eyes flashed vindinctively, uttering an exclamation at once expressive of fury and revenge. He started from his seat, and drawing his poignard, plunged it in her bosom. Jocasta shrieked, but wresting it from her bosom, plunged it in that of the perfidious Grimaldo, who fell lifeless at her feet, the former, nearly faint with the loss of blood, was borne to her apartment, where she soon after expired in the most excruciating torture, first directing her favourite attendant to her escrutoire, adding, its contents might perhaps save two lives, and lessen the black list of her enormities; this request, as soon as the affairs of the castle were in some measure arranged, was complied with, and the following paper discovered.

Confession of Jocasta de Rufens.

Revenge from my first remembrance has been the reigning passion in my breast; thus, having fixed my eye on a young man, much my inferior, both in birth and fortune, my father no sooner caused him to be removed to a distant quarter, than I vowed his death. My union with Sir Fermaldos, without once consulting my privacy, served only to rivet my resolution the more strongly. However, I cloaked my purpose under the appearance of redoubled tenderness. Deceitful monster! in an evil hour I rushed upon his privacy, and committed paracide.—I slew my father! From that moment his shade has haunted me.

The venerable Gortz too, unknowingly, oft probed my wounded conscience, and that so deeply, that I thought of stabbing him whilst in my presence, but his silver hairs reminded me of my father, and I desisted. Grimaldo, however, has confined him in the southern tower. Resolved to possess the estates of my ancestors; I slew my brother, and accused him of crimes, of which, bad as he was, he was totally innocent.

Sir Fermaldos at length returned, but his brave conqueror had made an impression on my heart, and with his assistance I had him conveyed to the gloomy cells of the eastern ruins, where, perhaps, he leads a life of sad captivity.

Here the paper ended, according to which they found Gortz and Sir Fermaldos in their respective dungeons, laden with irons, and nearly perishing for want; they, however, soon recovered from the effects of their late confinement, and Sir Fermaldos soon after marrying a lady of distinction, spent his days in connubial bliss at the seat of his ancestors. Friburgh castle being rendered untenable through the guilty spirits of Jocasta and Grimaldo, being pursued through its vaulted roof by the murdered Baron and his son, yells of the most terrific nature appalled the weary traveller with horror, till at length Friburgh castle became the terror of the surrounding Provinces.

FINIS.

T. Plummer, Printer, Seething-Lane.